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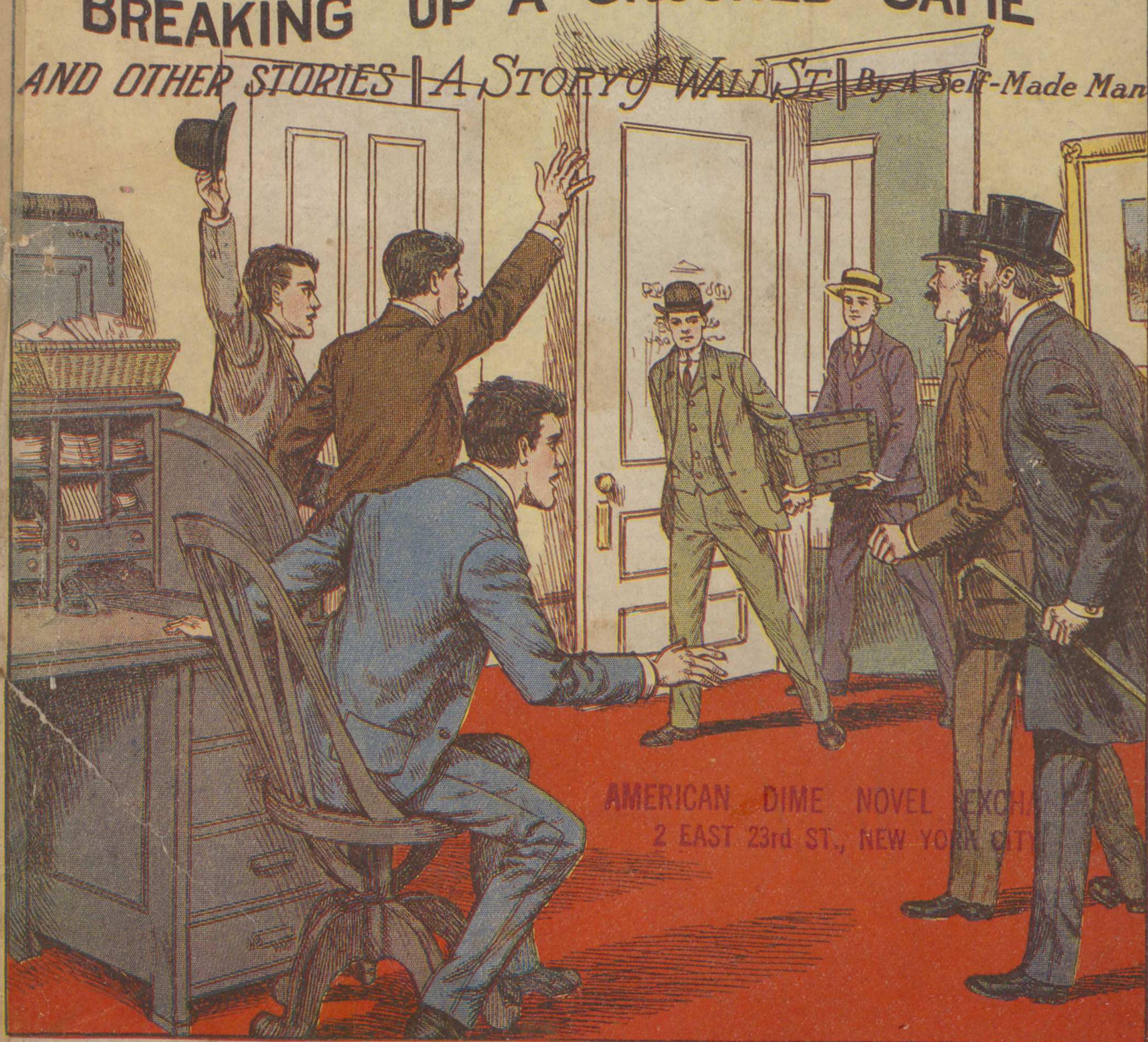
AND

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

**BEATING THE BUCKETSHOPS
OR
BREAKING UP A CROOKED GAME**

AND OTHER STORIES | A Story of Wall St. | By A Self-Made Man



AMERICAN DIME NOVEL

2 EAST 23rd ST., NEW YORK CITY

At that moment the door opened and Jimmy and Billy marched in bearing a heavy-looking box between them. The two "sharks," who thought they had the situation in hand, looked at the box uneasily. "What is this?" asked Skibo.

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Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

JN **A** Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1913, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York. Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter.

No. 420.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 17, 1913.

Price 5 Cents.

Beating the Bucket-Shops

—OR—

BREAKING UP A CROOKED GAME

(A STORY OF WALL STREET)

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE HERO AND OTHERS.

"Get out of the way, boy!" exclaimed a well-dressed, pompous-looking man to a bright-faced lad at the corner of Exchange Place and New street one morning.

The two met near the end of a long plank laid across a deep break in the sidewalk, made the afternoon before by the fall of a heavy safe while it was being hoisted to a window of one of the upper floors of the Vanderpool Building.

It was raining, the hole was full of slush and water, and both had umbrellas which had prevented them observing one another's approach.

As the pompous man had just stepped on the plank, while the boy had nearly crossed it, the latter thought it was the man's place to go back a couple of steps and let him finish the passage of the plank.

He couldn't otherwise get out of the way without jumping down into the watery slush, unless he turned around and retraced his steps, which he didn't see any sense of doing, particularly as he was in a hurry.

"Go back a few feet and I'll get out of your way," replied the boy, whose name was Dick Davenport.

"Go back you," said the man, sharply.

"It is much easier for you to go back," returned the boy.

"Don't talk to me that way. Go back or I'll push you off the plank."

At that moment another boy came up behind Dick.

He had no umbrella, but was protected from the rain by an oilskin suit.

He was an A. D. T. messenger by the name of Bob Stevens, and he was a friend of Dick's.

A third lad, smaller than the other two, also in oilskins, and working for the Maritime Exchange, came on behind Bob.

"Get a move on there," he cried, pushing against Bob.

"Go ahead, Dick," said Bob, grasping the situation, "you're holding up traffic."

Dick glanced over his shoulder and recognized Stevens.

"Hello, Bob," he said, then turning to the gentleman who was blocking his way he said: "Step back, mister."

"Get out of my way, I tell you, or I'll shove you off the plank," said the man, angrily.

"I don't think you will," retorted Dick, firing up at the man's words and obstinacy. "It's your place to get back. Can't you see there are two others behind me?"

"Confound you, get out of my way!" snorted the gentleman, jamming his umbrella into Dick's face.

"All together!" shouted the Maritime messenger, giving Bob a vigorous shove.

Bob passed the shove on to Dick, and that lad, finding himself propelled forward against the man, tried to slip by under his arm.

The result was the gentleman was struck on the side and swung half around.

His balance was destroyed and as he made a desperate effort to regain his equilibrium, Bob shot against him, too, and over he fell on the edge of the hole.

The soft, slippery dirt yielded under him and he slid down into the mud and water, his arm hitting the plank as he struck bottom, and his umbrella flying out of his hand, while his silk hat toppled off his head.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Maritime messenger, quite tickled over the gentleman's predicament, as he pushed Bob the rest of the way on to the sidewalk.

Bob couldn't help chuckling himself.

"You've done it, Jimmy," he said to the Maritime messenger, whom he recognized. "You'd better skip, quick."

"You did it yourself," grinned Jimmy, whose other name was Jenkins.

In the meantime the man was roaring like a mad bull, and his language was hardly fit to print.

"Hold on, fellows," said Dick, who had stopped. "We must help him out of that hole."

"Aw, let him get out himself. That's Skibo, of Skibo & Flint, king of the bucket-shops. It's the first time I ever heard of him being in a hole," said Bob.

"Never mind who he is. It's our place to help him out, for we were the cause of his getting in," said Dick.

"It was his own fault. Why didn't he get out of the way? He doesn't own the street," said Bob.

"Gosh! Doesn't he look funny?" laughed Jimmy, who was enjoying the futile efforts of the well-dressed man to extricate himself.

"Go back, Jimmy, and fish up his hat and umbrella," said Dick, who also knew the Maritime messenger.

"Get out. Let him fish them up himself," retorted Jimmy.

"Give me your hand, sir," said Dick. "Catch hold of his other arm, Bob, and we'll pull him out."

Bob reluctantly joined in the work of rescue.

The man, finding he couldn't get out unaided, condescended to accept the proffered arms, and the two boys, after some trouble, landed him on the edge of the sidewalk, but he was a sad sight, his shoes and trowsers, from the knees down, being covered with mud and soaked with water, while his light overcoat and bare head were drenched by the rain that was coming down in a lively way.

His umbrella, handle upward, was filled with moisture, and

his silk hat was also accumulating its share of the rain as it floated about in a puddle.

Mr. Skibo was terribly exasperated.

Instead of thanking the boys he raised his foot and gave Bob a rousing kick, and then dealt Dick a crack in the face that sent him against the building.

"Take that, you infernal pair of imps!" he roared.

Then he stepped on the plank, reached down and seized the handle of his umbrella, intending to fish out his hat with it.

The next moment he pitched back head foremost into the hole, propelled by Bob, who was furious over the kick.

His weight coming upon his umbrella and his silk hat, smashed both into shapeless affairs, while his smoothly-shaven face burrowed its way into the mire.

He rolled over on his back, thereby giving his overcoat a thorough application of soft mud.

He was a "holy show," and Jimmy laughed fit to split.

Bob was too mad over the kick to laugh, while Dick didn't know what to say at this final state of affairs.

Two gentlemen came around the corner at this moment and observed the predicament of Mr. Skibo.

They proceeded to assist him out of the hole.

The three boys concluded that it was the part of wisdom to get out of the way, and they started down toward Broad street at a rapid gait.

"Gee! he got a dose of it for fair," said Bob, with a broad grin. "I fixed him for kicking me."

"He handed you a rouser," chuckled Jimmy. "It raised you about a foot."

"And he gave me a crack in the jaw that I can feel yet," said Dick. "Nice way to show his gratitude for giving him a hand out of the hole."

"Oh, everybody knows what Skibo is. He's a financial pirate, and so is his partner, Moses Flint. They have robbed more cheap speculators in their bucket-shop than you could crowd into Madison Square Garden. They must have bank accounts as big as a sky-scraper."

"Ever put up anything with them?" asked Dick.

"Me? I should say not. If I were such a fool I could kiss the money good-by."

"I should think their customers ought to make a scoop on a rising market. I don't see how the bucket-shop can do them when the market is rising steadily."

"That's about the only time their customers do make anything; but the firm doesn't lose anything. They buy themselves, and whatever profit they make, squares them with the winners. Oh, they are foxy, all right. It's mighty little that ever gets away from them."

"What gets me is how they get the quotations all the time, when they've been cut out of all the exchanges, and are not supposed to be able to get ticker service."

"They get it, don't you worry. Money talks, and they've got loads of it."

"So long, fellers; I go down this way," said Jimmy, making a break for the opposite corner.

"Where are you bound for, Bob?" asked Dick.

"I've got a message for Broker Thomas further down Exchange Place. Where are you going?"

"Back to my office."

"You've got a snap with the old man Foster."

"Yes, it's pretty easy. The book-keeper and I run the office. Mr. Foster seldom comes down before eleven, and he generally goes home about three."

"He can't do a whole lot of business. It's a wonder he doesn't retire, for I've heard he's worth over half a million."

"He wouldn't be satisfied to stay away from Wall Street. He's been in the Street about fifty years, and he'd feel like a fish out of water if he stayed away. He does business for certain millionaire operators, who wouldn't have any one else look after their deals if they could help it."

"You ought to be able to pick up a good tip once in a while."

"I've got next to several, and have used them to lay up a little capital for my old age."

"That's a long way off. You aren't much more than eighteen."

"People grow old faster than they used to."

"How do you make that out?"

"Times are more strenuous. The world is moving faster."

"There's just as many days, weeks and months in a year as there used to be."

"That may be, but it only seems the other day I was going to school, and I graduated over four years ago. The next thing I know I'll be casting my first vote, and growing a mustache. Run along now—you've got a message to deliver, and you know how the funny papers show you messengers up."

Dick broke away and started up Broad street, while Bob went on his way.

CHAPTER II.

A LITTLE EXCITEMENT IN DICK'S OFFICE.

Dick was junior clerk, office boy, messenger and typist, all rolled into one, for David Foster, stockbroker, of the fourth floor, Anderson Building, Wall Street, whose only other employee was an elderly book-keeper, named James Smith, who had grown up in his service from office boy.

When Smith began work for Mr. Foster, the broker was a comparatively young man.

Now Mr. Foster was about seventy, and was a fine old gentleman.

He was known to be wealthy, as might be expected of a Wall Street man who had done little speculating in the market, and had confined himself strictly to building up a substantial and conservative business.

Mr. Foster reached the height of his business career ten years before this story opens, then competition on new lines altered the complexion of things very materially.

As his old and steady customers dropped out of the Street through retirement or death, he made no effort to replace them with new ones.

He employed no canvassers or runners-in, as had become the custom with the up-to-date brokers, and so his business gradually dwindled, and with it his office force.

He was getting old, and having made as much money as he cared to look after, he allowed things to take their course, until he now had two rooms, and two employees were enough to conduct his affairs.

He went to the Stock Exchange every day himself, even if he had nothing particular to do there, and if for some reason or another he failed to show up during the five-hour session his presence was missed, and somebody was sure to ask whether the old man was sick.

He was one of the most popular men in the Board-room, and the news of his death, when that event happened, was bound to produce a shock.

As Bob Stevens had remarked, Dick had a comparatively easy time of it, though he didn't quit as early as the other boys, but remained until Smith locked up the big safe at a few minutes before five.

Then he walked to the Cortlandt Ferry and took a boat for Jersey City, where he lived with his father, mother and two sisters.

When Dick reached the office, he handed a note to Mr. Smith and then perched himself on a high stool to resume his office work.

Mr. Foster wasn't down that day, the weather being unpleasant and there being nothing requiring his presence.

He had telephoned a few directions to the book-keeper, and Smith had reported sundry matters back to him.

At half-past twelve Dick went out to his lunch and was back at one.

Then Smith went out to his own lunch.

In less than five minutes the door opened and two men came in.

One remained near the door while the other advanced to the book-keeper's window and peered through.

"What can I do for you?" asked Dick, leaving his desk.

"Is Mr. Foster in?" asked the man.

"No, he didn't come down to-day."

The man made a sign to his companion and that party came forward.

"How long before the book-keeper will be back?" said the man at the window.

"He just went to lunch. He usually takes from thirty to forty minutes."

"How much money have you got lying around loose here?"

"What's that?" cried Dick.

The man shoved a revolver against his nose.

"Don't move or open your mouth, my young friend, or you might swallow a leaden pill. We are collecting money for the poor. We'll take what you have to give away. Understand?"

Dick gasped.

Never in his Wall Street experience had he heard of a hold-up of this kind in broad daylight in an office building.

Before he had his wits in working order again the other man walked inside the partition and, grabbing him around the neck with one arm, yanked him backward to the floor.

The man with the revolver then came inside, and, pulling Dick's handkerchief from his pocket, bound it across his mouth.

Then taking some hay rope from his overcoat pocket, he tied the boy's hands behind his back.

Dick was now helpless, and the men hauled him over beside the safe where they could keep their eyes on him while they rifled it.

It happened there was very little money in the cash-drawer, not over ten or twelve dollars, and the men were disappointed, for they expected to find quite a bunch.

Extending their depredations, they pulled out some certificates of stock.

"We can't sell that stuff," said one.

"We'll take it, anyway. We might be able to get rid of it in Jersey City," replied the other.

"It won't do to take chances. When the book-keeper comes in and releases the boy, the police will be notified, and all the brokerage houses will be warned about the stock. Drop it."

"But I don't see that we are getting anything for the risk we are running," said the other. "There isn't any cash at all in this blamed office. We would have got nearly as much by holding up a dago fruit seller."

"Hello, here's something worth while," said his companion, who had in the meanwhile been poking about the safe.

"What have you found?"

"An envelope with twelve \$100 bills in it."

"That's bang-up. I think we'd better go before somebody comes in."

They looked at Dick, who was making guttural noises and trying to free his hands.

"Sit up and look pleasant," said the man who had displayed the revolver, grabbing the boy by the collar and dragging him out of sight behind the open door of the safe. "What are you making faces about?"

Dick was making faces because the \$1,200 belonged to him—the proceeds of his ventures in the stock market.

He was wild at the idea of losing it, for it was the whole of his capital.

"Come on, Jim," said the other man, "we are wasting time."

As the men started to leave the little counting-room the corridor door opened and Bob Stevens came in.

He was accompanied by a friend of his named Billy Blake. Billy was also a friend of Dick's.

Bob looked at the two men as they came out through the glass door with some suspicion, for he saw no sign of Dick or the book-keeper in the counting-room.

"What are you chaps doing in there?" he asked.

"What business is that of yours? Stand out of the way!" cried the fellow in advance.

Just then Dick appeared with his mouth gagged and his hands tied.

That was enough for Bob.

"You fellows have been up to some crooked work—robbing the safe, I guess," he said. "You're not going to get away if we can help it. Grab one of them, Billy."

"Look here, young fellow, do you want to get hurt?" said the man who had spoken, drawing his revolver.

Bob noted his action, seized a chair, and, swinging it around, jabbed the feet of it into his stomach so suddenly that the man doubled up with an ejaculation of pain.

Bob gave him a second jab in the face and sent him staggering back, causing him to drop his revolver.

Dick was now out in the room, and as he had command only of his feet, he gave the fellow a heavy kick in the side just as Bob threw the chair at him.

The man went down on the floor half dazed by the complicated attack.

Bob picked up the revolver, cocked it and pointed it at the other fellow, who was struggling hard to shake off Billy's grip.

"Give in or I'll blow your head off," he said.

The man swung Billy around to cover himself.

"Let go of him, Billy. I've got a gun. Go and help Dick," said Bob.

Billy tried to get away, but the man held on to him.

"Let go of him or I'll shoot you through the head," cried Bob, shoving the revolver against the rascal's ear.

The touch of the cold steel subdued the crook and he suddenly gave in.

Billy got away and tore the handkerchief from Dick's mouth.

"Cut my hands loose, Billy," said Dick.

Billy whipped out his knife and slashed the hay rope in a twinkling.

Then the two threw themselves on the crook who was rising from the floor, forced him back and held him there.

Bob made the other man back up against the wall.

Dick went through the fallen man's pockets and got the envelope which contained his \$1,200.

He also recovered the \$12 the rascal had taken from the safe.

The fellow was then allowed to get up, whereupon Bob pointed the revolver at him and ordered him to join his friend against the wall.

"I'll get square with you chaps for this," hissed the rascal.

"Shut up!" cried Bob. "Pick up that chair, Billy."

Dick rushed into the counting-room and called up Police Headquarters on the 'phone.

He hastily communicated the facts and asked that two policemen be sent to the office to take charge of the men.

The three boys then stood guard over the pair till Mr. Smith came in.

The book-keeper was greatly astonished at what he saw.

Dick explained matters and said he had sent for the police. Smith was going to telephone downstairs for the janitor, but Dick said it wasn't necessary.

In a short time two officers came and the men were marched away, handcuffed together, and charged with attempted burglary.

CHAPTER III.

DICK TAKES A TRIP.

Bob and Billy went away without stating what had brought them to the office.

The former had lost so much time that he expected to get a calling-down from the manager of the office he was attached to.

"It was a mighty good thing my two friends turned up as those crooks were in the act of leaving," said Dick to the book-keeper.

"Yes, it was fortunate," said Mr. Smith, not knowing how very fortunate it was for Dick, who but for the coming of Bob and Billy probably would never have seen his \$1,200 again.

The incident was telephoned to Broker Foster, who congratulated Dick on the lucky ending of the affair.

Next morning at eleven Dick was at the Tombs Police Court with Bob and Billy.

He told his story when the men were brought to the bar, and the other two boys stated what they had seen, and how they contributed to the capture of the crooks.

The men were held by the magistrate, though the cheap lawyer they had secured argued for their discharge on the ground that they had stolen nothing.

"They took \$12 out of the safe," said Dick, who for good reasons of his own said nothing about the \$1,200.

They were subsequently released on \$300 bail each.

The market, which had been quiet for some days, picked up that afternoon.

The financial papers said that Steel, common, which was ruling around 42, was certain to go up in a day or two.

Dick, encouraged by the report, bought 100 shares of it on margin.

"It did not go up anything to speak of till Monday, when it jumped to 46."

Next day it went to 48 1-2.

As a consequence of the rise a good many persons bought the stock, and it kept on up to 50 and a fraction.

Dick was afraid to hold on any longer, though everything pointed to a further advance, but he saw \$800 profit in his deal at that point, and he believed that a bird in the hand was better than several in the bush, so he sold out.

Next day Steel went to 52, and then suddenly dropped back to 49.

A lot of the stock was thrown on the market by nervous holders, and that helped send it down to 45.

The financial papers still insisted that Steel would go to 60, and that the slump was caused by the efforts of certain persons to cash in.

Dick thought the argument good, and went in again at 45 to the extent of 100 shares.

In a few days it was up to 50 again.

The papers said it was the best thing on the market to buy and hold.

Dick was impressed and bought another 100 with the rest of his money.

By the end of that week it was up to 53.

"Dick," said Mr. Foster, about half-past eleven Saturday morning, looking in at the counting-room and not seeing the book-keeper, who had just stepped out into the corridor, "do you know if Allen & Brady have delivered that block of Alpha & Omega mining stock?"

"I think not, sir. I haven't seen it," replied the boy.

"Where's Mr. Smith?"

Just stepped out to the wash-room, sir."

"Ask him about it when he comes back, and if it hasn't been delivered, go over to Allen & Brady's office and inquire about it," said the broker.

"Yes, sir," answered Dick.

Mr. Smith returned in about five minutes and Dick asked him about the stock.

"It hasn't been delivered yet," said the book-keeper.

"Then I'll have to go and see about it."

"All right," said Mr. Smith.

Dick put on his hat and went over to Allen & Brady's office.

He asked the cashier about the stock.

"I sent our boy with it five minutes ago," was the reply he got.

Dick returned to the elevator and took the first cage down.

He was the only passenger, and as his eyes happened to range around the elevator he saw a package stuck between the iron slats, and to his surprise noticed it was addressed to his boss.

"Say, what is that package doing there?" he said to the elevator man. "It is addressed to Mr. Foster, the broker I work for."

"Are you his messenger?"

"Yes."

"Well, I can't give it to you. It was dropped by Allen & Brady's boy, who went down with me on my last trip. I'm waiting for him to come back and claim it."

"It's a package of mining stock I was sent over to get," said Dick, as the elevator stopped at the ground floor. "The cashier told me he had just sent it over to our office. I'll go up with you and accompany you into Allen & Brady's office. The cashier will authorize you to hand it to me. My boss is waiting for it."

The elevator man agreed to do that, and accordingly on his way up again he left the cage standing at the third floor, with several passengers in it, and went with Dick to Allen & Brady's office.

The matter was quickly settled there, but the firm's office boy was in for a calling-down when he got back.

It was ten minutes of twelve when Dick got back to his own office.

"Has Allen & Brady's boy been here?" he asked the book-keeper.

"No," was the answer.

"Then I guess he's looking for the package he dropped."

"Not our package of mining stock?" said Mr. Smith.

"Yes, our package."

"My gracious! And Mr. Foster is waiting for it. He promised to deliver the stock this afternoon. Where did the boy lose it?"

"He dropped it in the elevator of his building, and I saw it there after the elevator man had picked it up and was holding it for the boy to return for it."

"Oh, then you've brought it with you?" said the book-keeper, looking relieved.

"Yes, here it is."

"Take it in to Mr. Foster."

Dick did so.

The broker opened the package and examined the certificates.

Finding them all properly transferred, he told Dick to wrap them up again.

As soon as Dick had accomplished that, Mr. Foster took the package and addressed it to "Professor Haggard, Hercules Villa, Washington Turnpike, Rutherford, N. J."

"I want you to deliver this package to its address, Dick," said Mr. Foster. "The Erie road will take you to Rutherford, and you can get a carriage at the station to take you to the villa. It's about a mile outside of town."

Dick had an Erie Railroad time-table, and, consulting it, he found he had plenty of time to get his lunch before the local train started from Jersey City for the town he was bound for.

In due time he reached the train shed, waited till it was time to get aboard a car, and was landed at Rutherford after a short ride.

The weather had changed since he left the office, and now threatened rain.

Dick called a cabman and told him where he wanted to go.

"That's a long way from here," said the driver.

"How far?"

"About four miles. It will cost you \$3 to go there."

"Say, don't give me such a steer as that," said Dick. "It isn't over two miles. I'll give you \$2 to take me there and back."

The driver protested that it was over three miles at any rate, and called up another driver to substantiate his statement.

The other jehu said it was nearly four miles, and that he wouldn't take a fare there and back for less than \$4.

"Drive me to the police station, and if the officer there says it's four miles, I'll let it go at that," said Dick, who objected to be robbed by cab drivers.

The driver he was bargaining with said the station was out of the way, and that rather than go there he'd take Dick to the Haggard Villa for \$3.50, and bring him back again, but if he had to wait any time he would have to charge 25 cents for each quarter of an hour.

"I'll give you \$3, and that is to include a wait of fifteen minutes, if necessary," said Dick. "If you don't want to go on those terms, say so, and I'll look up another cab."

"Jump in," said the man.

It was after two when they started, and it soon began to rain, though not hard.

It wasn't a full mile to the point where the Washington Turnpike began.

The driver reined in and, opening a little hole near the roof of his vehicle, asked Dick how far out on the turnpike the house was.

"I told you at the station that it was about a mile."

"Which side of the road is it?"

"I don't know."

"What sort of looking house is it?"

"I don't know that, either. You'll have to make inquiries after you have gone nearly a mile."

The cabman drove ahead.

They passed many suburban residences, but these became farther apart as they proceeded.

Finally they came upon a sort of road-house and garage, and the driver stopped there to inquire about Haggard Villa.

He was told that it was two miles further up the road, on the opposite side.

With the rain coming down harder the driver was mad as a hatter, for he believed Dick had lied to him about the distance.

He went to the cab, opened the door, and said:

"Look here, young feller, I've gone two miles from the station now, and the man in that saloon says the house is two miles further on, on the other side of the road. You told me it was only one mile out on this pike."

"That's what my boss in Wall Street told me. I guess the man in there made a mistake. I'll step in and see him with you," said Dick.

They went into the saloon together, but the proprietor insisted that Hercules Villa was at least two miles further down the road.

"I know the place," he said, in a confident tone. "It is a two-story cottage of some size, built on the English country style, with a stone wall in front and an iron gate. The wall is about four feet high, very solid looking, but easy to get over. There are lots of elm trees on the place. The professor is an odd sort of chap. They say he's got a museum on the ground floor. At any rate, he's a collector of old, rare books, fossils and other curiosities. He is a widower, has a niece living with him—a very pretty girl—and two or three servants."

"Well, if it's two miles further down the road I'll give you another dollar," said Dick to the driver of the cab, "but I didn't expect to spend so much."

The driver agreed, but as it was raining heavily, he proposed to wait until the weather cleared up a bit.

Dick consented, and the cab was led under the cover of a shed.

When the man came back to the saloon, Dick treated him to a drink and took soda himself, then he stood by the window overlooking the road and watched the pouring rain.

It was still raining hard when the clock pointed at three, and there was no indication of a let-up, but as Dick was in no rush, and as he felt sure he would find the professor home on such a disagreeable afternoon, he did not show any impatience over the delay.

Another hour passed, the driver having got into a game of pinochle with the owner of the place, who was doing no business that afternoon, and was in no hurry to get on, as the rain still kept up a heavy downpour.

"This rain is liable to keep up indefinitely," said Dick, at last; "I think we ought to be going on."

"Don't be in a hurry," said the proprietor, who didn't want to lose the driver yet a while. "It will let up soon. It can't continue much longer."

It did keep up just as bad for half an hour longer, and then it quit.

The cabman brought his rig around to the door, Dick got in and away they went again.

But Dick's troubles of the afternoon were not over.

They had covered perhaps a mile, when the cab, in turning out suddenly for an automobile to pass, snapped an axle.

The forward part of the vehicle went down, throwing Dick from his seat and pitching the driver into the road.

The horse took fright and dashed ahead, dragging the disabled cab after him.

Dick was bumped about inside, and realized that he was in a situation of some peril.

In this way another mile was covered, and then the cab collided with a tree, and the shock gave the Wall Street boy a terrible shaking up.

When he pulled himself together he found the vehicle at rest.

Opening the door after some effort, he found that the horse had torn himself free and gone on ahead at his own sweet will.

The cab, jammed against the tree, was a partial wreck. Dick's ride from town had come to a sudden termination.

CHAPTER IV.

A STARTLING RECEPTION.

"This is a pretty state of things," said Dick, as he viewed the broken-down cab. "I'll have to walk back to the station after I deliver my package, and that's a four-mile tramp as things have turned out. What with the rain, the extra distance and this wreck, I've been up against it on this trip. Well, it's getting late, and it may rain again, so I'd better get a move on and get my business over with. Now, I wonder whether the runaway carried me by my destination or not? If I go on I may walk away from the house, while if I go back I may have to retrace my steps and lose considerable time."

He looked up and down the road, and about a quarter of a mile further on he thought he saw a house standing back of a low wall.

As there was not a house within his range of vision behind, he started ahead.

It was five o'clock, and the gloom caused by the lowering rain clouds was deepening into the dusk of a spring day.

The landscape all around looked washed out and indistinct.

The road being a good one, intended for the growing automobile traffic, offered first-rate walking, with little mud, and Dick made rapid progress.

He soon saw that the object he had taken for a house was a rambling, two-story cottage, long and low, and that it was cut off from the road by a low, thick stone wall.

The description of Hercules Cottage given by the proprietor of the road-house fitted this place perfectly, so Dick was satisfied he had reached his destination.

When he came to the iron gate he found it fastened, and he looked in vain for a bell handle to announce his presence.

There was an electric push button in one of the stone columns, but the boy overlocked it in the gathering darkness.

The only course open to him was to vault the stone wall, and this he did.

He landed on the edge of a graveled walk, and this led up to what Dick supposed was the front door, as it faced the road.

The front entrance to the cottage faced in a direction parallel with the road, and the gravel walk led around in that direction.

Dick, however, walked up to the side entrance, which was more pretentious than side entrances usually are, and looked for a bell handle.

Finding none, he struck a match and saw a push-button.

He shoved it and the door swung open, apparently of its

own accord, for no one was near it, and he stepped into a kind of reception hall, finished and furnished in mission style.

This gave the place a somber look under the single electric bulb depending from the ceiling.

Dick wondered where the electricity came from, as there were no wires running so far out of town.

He could only conclude that the professor had a small, private plant of his own, which he figured as an expensive luxury; but as the gentleman was wealthy, doubtless, he could afford such things.

Dick remained near the door, which had closed of its own volition, and waited for some one to appear and ask him his business.

No one came, and seeing another push-button beside the door facing him, he stepped forward to press it.

In doing so he walked on to a square of black marble in the center of the reception hall, all the other squares being white.

Immediately he heard a click, a panel in the wall slipped back and a glistening skeleton, complete in all its parts, glided forth about a foot and stopped, its ghastly, grinning skull looking straight at him.

Dick had as much nerve as any boy, but this uncanny object, springing suddenly out of the solid looking wall, startled him, and he stepped back instinctively.

The moment his weight left the black square the skeleton disappeared as if by magic.

"What the dickens am I up against?" breathed the Wall Street boy. "I can't have struck the right house, or this is some trick that is worked off on strange visitors."

Again Dick stepped forward, and again he heard the click, and the skeleton reappeared.

This time he didn't step back, and the skeleton remained.

"Well, you're not going to bar me out," said Dick, resolutely.

He knew there was nothing supernatural about it.

It was simply a mounted skeleton, natural or artificial, he couldn't tell which, worked by some concealed mechanism.

"The professor is a practical joker, I guess," continued Dick. "He has rigged this thing up to see what effect it has on his callers. I dare say he thinks it's a funny scheme, and he may be watching me now through an eye-hole, but if a visitor has a weak heart it might lead to unpleasant results."

Dick stepped toward the skeleton.

As he left the square of black marble the skeleton vanished in the same way it had done before.

"There's a spring in the floor that controls its actions," thought the boy.

He looked down, and now noticed the black square more particularly.

He stepped back on it and the skeleton came forth for the third time.

He walked off it and the object vanished again.

"I see. Great idea," he said. "Now I'll push the button beside the inner door and see what happens."

He pushed it.

He was prepared for another surprise, but none came.

Presently the door opened and a lovely looking girl of perhaps sixteen years stood in the opening and looked at him inquiringly.

"Is Professor Haggard at home?" asked Dick, favoring the girl with an admiring look.

"He is. Do you wish to see him?"

"Yes. I have brought a package for him from Broker Foster, of Wall Street."

"What name shall I tell him?"

"Richard Davenport."

"Take a seat," and the girl waved her hand toward a stiff-looking chair standing against the wall.

The girl disappeared and Dick sat down.

"She's a stunner," thought the boy. "As pretty as a picture. She must be the niece the road-house man mentioned. I'd give something to know her."

After a lapse of several minutes the door opened again and the girl reappeared and told Dick to follow her.

She led him across a handsomely furnished room to a door which she opened and bad the boy enter.

Dick walked in and found himself in another large room furnished with many bookcases, full of books, and other cases full of all kinds of articles which he did not take notice of, as his attention was directed toward an elderly man in a dressing-gown who sat in a comfortable arm-chair in front of an open grate fire.

"Professor Haggard?" asked Dick.

"Yes. You are from my old friend David Foster, of Wall

Street and Madison avenue, and you bring the block of Alpha and Omega mining stock I requested him to purchase for me," said the professor, holding out his hand, not for the package, but to greet his young visitor.

Dick shook hands with the smiling old gentleman, whose genial manner diffused hospitality, and produced the package.

"Thank you," said the professor. "I am glad to know you, my young friend. Pray remove your overcoat and make yourself comfortable. This is a miserable afternoon. I am sorry you had to come in such weather. Did you reach here in a hired conveyance?"

"Yes, sir, but under difficulties."

"Oh, well, there is no reason why you should hurry back. I will have the man and his horse attended to. Oblige me by pushing that button."

"The man is not here, and his vehicle is a wreck a short distance down the road," said Dick.

"How is that?" asked the professor, in surprise.

Dick briefly told him about his trip from Rutherford, and the long time it had taken to reach his house.

"That is too bad. The horse, you say, has run away, and you don't know what has become of the driver?"

"He might have been thrown off into the road when the axle broke and his horse took flight. I think that is what happened, for during the rest of the trip I don't remember hearing his voice, as one would naturally expect, trying to stop the animal. But then I was too confused in the jolting cab to notice anything beyond my own safety. I couldn't say how far the horse speeded before we fetched up with a shock against the tree, and that knocked me all endwise. I was lucky to escape without any injury," said Dick.

"You were, indeed," said the professor, in a tone of concern. "Well, since you have no means of returning to Rutherford, you shall remain to dinner, and then I will send you back to the station in my car."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir. It is very kind of you to go to that trouble."

"It is no trouble at all. My gardener, who is my chauffeur, will make the run to town and back in a very short time. In the meantime your company will afford me considerable pleasure, I am sure," said the professor with a smile.

"Thank you, sir," said Dick, in his politest way.

"You live in New York?"

"No; in Jersey City."

"Then you haven't so far to go to reach home."

"No, sir. I dare say I could get home in a little over an hour from here if I made close connection with a train."

"I'll see that you do. How long have you been working for Mr. Foster?"

"About three years. I started in as office boy. He had several clerks and a stenographer then. Now he's only got one book-keeper, who is cashier, and myself. I am helping on the books, work the typewriter and run messages."

At that moment a yell rang through the house.

It came from the direction of the reception hall.

"What's that? Somebody must have got hurt," said Dick. The professor smiled.

He did not appear to be in the least disturbed.

"Push that button, please," he said.

A man servant immediately responded.

"Go and see who is in the reception hall, Andrew," said the professor.

Then a light broke across Dick's mind.

"Somebody must have got in there like I did and brought out the skeleton," he said.

The professor looked at Dick in some surprise.

"Did you enter the house by the side way?" he asked.

"The side way? Isn't that the front of the house?" asked Dick.

"You mean the door facing the gate?"

"Yes."

"No. The cottage fronts to the west. The road at this point runs east and west. I wished my house to face the setting sun. I prefer that exposure. As the cottage is long and narrow, all the rooms face to the south, which gives them plenty of sunshine during the better part of the day, which is an advantage in winter. The windows on the north side light the corridor which runs from one end of the house to the other. I am speaking now of the second story. So you came in by the side entrance hall, stepped on the black square and brought the skeleton out of its retreat. You never gave a sign. You must be a lad of nerve," smiled the professor, approvingly.

"I suppose I have as much nerve as the next person. I won't say I wasn't startled, for I was, not expecting to see

such a thing, but as I don't take any stock in the supernatural, and I am sure a skeleton—a real one—can't walk about of its own accord, why—"

Here the door opened and the servant reappeared.

"Well, Andrew, who was the visitor?" asked Professor Haggard.

"He's a cabman. The skeleton frightened a week's growth out of him, and I had some difficulty in calming him down. I had to assure him that he imagined seeing a skeleton, though he insisted that he had seen it as plainly as he saw me. He is sitting in the hall now, but he's shaking all over. He wanted me to let him out. I told him I couldn't let him go until he had explained the cause of his visit. Then he told me that he had brought a young gentleman out to this neighborhood in his cab, had met with an accident which caused the horse to run away, throwing him into the road and stunning him. When he came to he said he had followed the tracks of the runaway and found his hack a wreck, where it had run against a tree. His horse was gone and so was the young man. He went on half a mile and found his horse standing by the side of the road, and brought him back as far as this place, which he said he recognized as the house the young man had hired him to drive him to. He tied the horse to the gate, got over the wall and came here to see if the young man was in the cottage. He pushed the button at the door, which opened, and he walked in. Seeing nobody, and perceiving another door in front of him, he advanced to push the button, when the skeleton suddenly appeared and scared the wits out of him," said the servant without a smile.

"Return and tell him that the young man is here, and will remain for some time. Take him around to the kitchen and let him dry himself, and tell the cook to provide him with his dinner in due time. Bring his horse inside and take the animal to the barn and give it feed and water. Inform him that I will see him shortly and see what can be done with his vehicle."

"Yes, sir," bowed the servant.

"I should like to see him a moment if you have no objection," said Dick. "He is probably worried over the \$4 I agreed to pay him for fetching me out here and back. I should like to pay him, though it is out of his power, I guess, to perform the balance of his contract."

"Very well. Go with Andrew, and when you have settled the matter come back," said the professor.

So Dick went with the servant, who was the gardener and chauffeur, to the reception hall, and found the cab driver in a chair, gazing fearfully at the spot where the skeleton was hidden.

CHAPTER V.

DICK AT THE VILLA.

"Hello," said Dick, "so you've recovered your horse?"

"Yes. I thought you were hurt and I came here to find out if you had reached this place," said the driver, in shaky tones.

"I wasn't hurt much, but I got a bad shaking up when the cab hit the tree and the horse broke loose. I didn't know where I was for some minutes. I felt as if a house had fallen on me. This has been a rather unfortunate trip for both of us."

"I should say so. It's unfortunate for me. My cab is a wreck, and I don't know how I'm going to get it back to town, nor where I will get the money to have it repaired. How about the \$4 you owe me? As I can't take you back, I'll call it \$3."

"Oh, I'll let it go at \$4, under the circumstances," said Dick, pulling out some bills.

One of them fluttered from his fingers, and in reaching for it Dick stepped on the black square and the skeleton appeared.

The cabman, who was clearly a superstitious fellow, uttered a cry of terror and rushed for the door, which, however, was fast.

"What's the matter with you?" said Dick, whose back was toward the skeleton, as he stepped off the black square toward the driver.

"Let me out! Let me out!" howled the cabman, clawing at the door, which had no handle and could be opened only by a push-button.

"What do you want to get out for?" asked the boy, having no idea that the skeleton had made an appearance.

"This place is haunted. Let me out!" said the man.

"Haunted!" grinned Dick. "What put that idea in your head?"

"Don't you see the skeleton?"

"What are you talking about?"

The man gazed nervously over his shoulder, but the skeleton had returned to its hole.

"Didn't you see it?" he said, turning around.

"See what?"

"The skeleton. It was right behind you."

"Get out, you're dreaming."

"I tell you I saw it—twice—once when I first came in and just now," insisted the driver.

"I'm afraid you're not quite sober," said Dick.

"I am perfectly sober."

"But I don't see any skeleton."

"It's gone."

"Yes, I guess it has. You've got a strong imagination, my friend."

"I saw it, I tell you. Don't you suppose I can see what's before my eyes?"

"But your statement is ridiculous. If a skeleton came into this room, which doesn't stand to reason, I'd have seen it, too. Calm down and take your money."

The man took the bills and then said he wanted to get away at once.

Andrew then delivered his message from the professor.

"I'd rather not stay in a house that has skeletons floating around," replied the driver.

"Nonsense!" said Andrew; "come with me."

He walked around the black patch, took the man by the arm and led him to a door on the side of the room, and they went out together.

Dick chuckled as he walked to the inner door and pushed against it.

He found it fast.

After trying in vain to open it he had to push the button.

The pretty girl opened it again.

"Sorry to trouble you, miss, but I'm locked out," said Dick.

"No trouble at all," she answered with a smile, as Dick passed through.

"The library is over there, I believe?" he said.

"Yes."

"I suppose you don't mind that skeleton out there?"

She smiled, but made no reply.

Dick bowed and re-entered the library.

He told the professor how he was inadvertently the cause of the skeleton frightening the cabman a second time.

"It's funny how some people, no matter how strong they are physically, lose their nerve when they see something uncanny," said Dick. "If they only stopped to reason the matter out they would know that there was nothing to it."

The professor nodded and changed the subject to other matters.

Half an hour passed and then a bell announced that dinner was on the table.

Professor Haggard led Dick upstairs to the bath-room, where he could wash his hands and comb his hair.

Then they proceeded to the dining-room together.

The room was finished in oak, and all the furnishings matched the color scheme.

A magnificent sideboard, set off with cut glass, stood on one side, while between the two windows was a china cabinet filled with costly china plates and other articles kept wholly for display.

There were three large steel engravings on the walls of game scenes—one representing three men and two dogs engaged in duck hunting, a second showing two men and a dog out grouse shooting, while the third was of similar character.

There were likewise panels showing, in relief, a string of ducks, another of birds, a third of fish, and so on.

The oak table was covered with a snow-white cloth, spread with the customary display of knives, forks, spoons, glasses and other articles.

The illumination was furnished by a cluster of electric bulbs above the center of the table, surrounded by a red shade, from which strings of red beads hung close together.

There were also four bulbs about the room, but these were not lighted.

A rich, red curtain, one side of which was looped up, cut off the dining-room from the parlor, and Dick caught sight of the shiny surface of an upright piano.

Although the weather without was cold and damp, the temperature of the house was delightfully balmy.

With the exception of the library and the professor's bedroom, the cottage was heated throughout by steam.

Dick afterward found out that the steam pipes were extended to a conservatory which adjoined one end of the house.

At the foot of the table stood the lovely niece of the professor, and Dick was formally introduced to her.

Her name was Rose Maitland, and Dick was sure that no rose was sweeter than she.

He took his seat at one side, and Andrew, who officiated as butler, waited on them, all dishes being brought in and placed on a side table by a maid.

There was nothing elaborate about the meal.

It was the plain, every day one that the professor and his niece always sat down to.

Dick enjoyed it hugely, because he was not accustomed to being served by a servant.

Andrew knew his business in the dining-room as well as he understood gardening and how to run a motor car.

He moved noiselessly about, and nothing escaped his observant eye.

He was, of course, accustomed to the ways of Professor Haggard and his niece, but Dick always found him at his elbow when he wanted anything.

After dinner was over the professor told Miss Maitland to entertain Dick in the parlor, while he went to see the cab driver.

The girl dropped the raised half of the curtain, which shut out the dining-room completely, and she and the young visitor sat together on a handsome tete-a-tete.

Dick was never bashful with the girls, and he proceeded to get better acquainted with the fair Miss Rose.

He told her about his home, his two sisters, and about Wall Street, and she listened with a great deal of attention.

She in her turn told him about her secluded life in Hercules Cottage.

Her mother had been the professor's only sister, and her father had been an officer in the British army.

Both were dead, and she had come to live with her uncle, who had settled permanently in the States.

Professor Haggard, she said, had been connected with many universities, both in England and on the Continent, as she termed Europe.

He was considered an authority on ancient history, and had been connected with learned expeditions that went to the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, as well as to Egypt, where he had explored the great pyramids, to Assyria and other places.

"His cabinets of curiosities are very fine," she went on. "Have you examined them?"

"No, I have not had that pleasure," replied Dick.

"He has a very large collection of rare books which have cost him a great deal of money. You should ask him to show you some of his choicest. They are really worth looking at even if one is not especially interested in such things," she said.

"I should be glad to look at them, but I fear I shall have no time for that. It is getting on to nine now, and I have already encroached a great deal on Professor Haggard's hospitality."

"You mustn't say encroached, Mr. Davenport. My uncle was glad to offer you the freedom of his house under the circumstances. As he seems to have taken quite a fancy to you, it is probable he will invite you to come again. He hardly ever extends such an invitation to one he had not already met a number of times. I might almost say you are the first within my recollection he has taken to right away, and for that reason I believe he will desire to see you again. Do you live far from here?"

"No, not very far. My home is in Jersey City."

"Your employer, Mr. Foster, is an old and intimate friend of my uncle's, and it is quite possible that Mr. Foster has mentioned you in terms that recommends you to my uncle's notice."

"I should be very glad to stand well in Professor Haggard's estimation, but I hardly see how I can greatly interest him. I am only a boy, and haven't even had the advantage of a high school education. My studies ceased when I graduated from the grammar school, but I endeavor to keep abreast of things, particularly all that concern Wall Street and the financial world."

At that juncture Professor Haggard came in and took a seat.

"There is a train for Jersey City in fifty minutes," he said. "My car will be at the door in about twenty-five minutes, and it will land you at the station in plenty of time to catch the train. Now, Rose, I think our young friend would like to hear you play and sing a little."

The girl went to the piano and played a couple of pieces in artistic style.

Then she sang Robin Adair with a feeling and expression that quite carried Dick away, as the saying is.

The twenty-five minutes passed all too quickly for Dick.

The professor finally got up and said the car was awaiting him.

"I shall be glad to have you call and spend an afternoon and evening with us soon again, young man," he said. "I want to show you about the grounds, and I should also be pleased to show you some of my books and treasured curiosities."

"Thank you, sir. It would give me great pleasure to visit you again and see your treasures as well as the grounds about the house," said Dick, who then shook hands with the professor and his fair niece, bade them good-by and stepped into the car.

As they sped down the road Dick noticed that the cab was gone from its roosting spot against the tree.

He asked Andrew what had become of it.

He was told that he and the driver had fixed it so it could be driven slowly to town, and the cabman had departed with it after eating a good dinner at the house.

Dick reached home about quarter of eleven, and found his people not a little worried over his unexplained absence.

His story, however, explained everything to their satisfaction.

Then he turned in with his head full of Rose Maitland, and it is not improbable that she figured in his dreams.

CHAPTER VI.

RELATING TO BUCKET-SHOPS.

On Monday Dick reported the events of Saturday afternoon to Mr. Foster.

"Dear me, I don't see how I could have made such a mistake as to the distance of Hercules Villa from Rutherford," said the broker. "I have been there a number of times, for the professor and I are old friends. So it's three miles, eh?"

"Yes, sir," and Dick went on to recount the mishap to the cab.

"Well, well, you had quite an adventure," said Mr. Foster.

Dick said nothing about the skeleton which guarded the side entrance to the cottage, presuming that his boss knew all about it.

The professor had not explained to him why it had been installed there, and he had not ventured to express any curiosity on the subject.

Professor Haggard did not strike him as one who took any great interest in practical joking, so he concluded that it was there for a definite purpose—to discourage visitors from repeating a visit by the side door, perhaps.

Also as a trap to catch any burglar who might venture to break in that way.

As there was a ticker in the office outside the counting-room enclosure, Dick had ample opportunity to keep track of the market quotations, and that day he kept his eye on Steel, which went to 55.

That put him \$1,500 ahead on both deals.

Next day Steel was the principal attraction of the Board-room and advanced to 60 in the course of the day.

It did not do so well on the following day, but it closed a couple of points ahead of the opening price, and on Friday it reached 65 and a fraction.

It seemed likely to go still higher, but Dick thought he would cash in.

So he sold and figured his profits at \$3,500.

Notwithstanding that the Stock Exchange exerted all its influence to down the bucket-shop business, there were still several offices that conducted business on a purely gambling basis.

These offices were run under various high sounding titles, such as the Mutual Banking and Brokerage Co., the Co-operative Investment Co. and others.

Only one of the bunch was conducted under a firm name.

This was Skibo & Flint, and Skibo was generally recognized as the king of the bucket-shop operators.

While these concerns were supposed to be working independently of one another, they were, as a matter of fact, a combination or bucket-shop trust.

Skibo was the directing head of all of them, and Flint was his active assistant.

A score of regular brokers were in a syndicate which had furnished the capital to enable them to boggle up independent bucket-shop men and run on a big basis under the active management of Skibo & Flint.

Those gentlemen received a large salary, and a fine rake-off on all business transacted, but the chief profit was turned in to the treasurer of the syndicate.

Although none of the bucket-shops now had direct communication with the Exchanges, or could obtain the regular ticker service, they got the quotations just the same, and almost as quick as the regular brokers.

And they were served via the office of one of the members of the syndicate.

A telegraph instrument capable of sending half a dozen messages at one time was installed in the member's office, with private wires running to the office of each bucket-shop.

As fast as the quotations came in they were flashed to all the bucket-shops at the same time, and there you are.

Wash sales were constantly being conducted by members of the syndicate for the benefit of the bucket-shops, and all orders for these sales came through Skibo & Flint.

In spite of the exposures made of bucket-shops through the medium of certain magazines and the daily press, customers continued to flock into those places.

These speculators were almost wholly persons who did not have capital enough to patronize regular brokers.

Small margins, such as five per cent., were encouraged in the bucket-shops, so that their dupes could be more easily wiped out.

Wash sales, where the game was worth the trouble, completed what the limited margins failed to do.

So the bucket-shops thrived and the secret syndicate declared regular dividends that added largely to the bank accounts of its members.

The little bank patronized by Dick and a large clientage of cheap speculators was classed as a bucket-shop by the brokerage fraternity.

Inasmuch as one could buy or sell as low as five shares of any stock on the list on a five per cent. margin at the place it deserved the appellation, but that was as far as its bucket-shop methods went.

The bank actually bought and sold, through its representative at the Exchanges, the stock dealt in by its customers, and its customers had the same chance of winning, about one in ten, as they would have had if they had been able to operate through a regular broker.

The worst that could be said against the little bank was that it encouraged promiscuous trading by persons who could not afford to speculate, and this was the chief charge against the bucket-shops.

The bucket-shops did not buy or sell the stocks in which their customers traded—they simply bet against their customers winning.

In all gambling games the percentage is against the player, and in no game so great as in stock speculation.

The bucket-shops increased this percentage by stacking the cards against the customer whenever it was worth while, either through the size of the customer's deal or the combined amount of a number of deals on the same stock which showed signs of winning.

Dick had the methods of the bucket-shops down pretty fine, but he did not know that they were operated under the patronage of a syndicate composed of presumably honest traders.

About the time that he closed out his second successful deal in Steel he was sent uptown by Mr. Smith to hand Mr. Foster, who had not come down that day, an important letter.

On his way back to the elevated station he saw the marshal of the district dispossessing a family from a respectable looking flathouse.

It was a sight Dick had seen several times before, but only in the poorer sections of the city, and it was not a pleasant one.

The goods were piled up along the edge of the sidewalk and were being watched by the two sons of the evicted tenant.

As they were respectable looking lads, Dick stopped and asked one of them why they had been put out.

"Because we couldn't pay our rent," replied the boy.

"Is your father out of work?" asked Dick.

"He lost his position through speculating in Wall Street, and all his money, too, so we haven't a dollar left."

"Can't you raise some funds among your friends to tide you over?"

"My father is out looking for money, and my mother is hunting a cheap flat."

"Through what brokerage house did your father put his deals?"

"Skibo & Flint. He says they robbed him."

"He couldn't have gone to a worse place, for that firm is a bucket-shop, and I know pretty well what their methods are."

"Have you speculated there yourself?"

"No; but I am employed in Wall Street and know the ropes."

"You get good wages down there, don't you?"

"Yes, I guess I get all I earn."

"Who do you work for?"

Dick told him.

"I've been trying to get a job for some time. I wish I could get a position in Wall Street. How did you get yours?"

"The head of the firm that employs my father got me the opening."

At that moment the father of the boys came along with a moving van.

While the men were loading the furniture and other articles into the truck, Dick asked him if he had lost all his money at Skibo & Flint's bucket-shop.

"Yes, every cent. The scoundrels robbed me," said the man.

"Why did you continue speculating there, then?"

"Because I was a fool, and I did not realize how I was getting the worst of it. Once in a while they allowed me to win, to encourage me to keep on, but most of the times I lost."

"There ought to be some way of getting back at such a firm. Can't you bring a charge of swindling against them?"

"No, for I couldn't prove it."

"But if you are sure they robbed you you ought to be able to show them up."

"It can't be done. They are too shrewd. I know a dozen men who have been cleaned out the same as I was, and they are just as helpless as I am."

After some further talk Dick returned downtown, his mind occupied with the evils of the bucket-shop business, and wondering if there wasn't some way to break up the business.

He spoke to Book-keeper Smith about it, and told him he had seen a very respectable family dispossessed owing to the fact that the head of the house had speculated through a bucket-shop.

"He was a foolish man," said the book-keeper. "He should have kept out of Wall Street, and out of a bucket-shop in particular."

"If he'd gone to the little bank on Nassau street he'd have got a square deal."

"That's a bucket-shop."

"No, it isn't."

"Why, you can buy or sell as small a quantity of stock as five or ten shares there. No reputable broker will buy or sell less than 100 shares for a customer."

"That's all right. The bank buys the stock for you and holds it. A bucket-shop doesn't do that, except, maybe, occasionally."

"How do you know that the little bank actually buys or sells the stocks ordered by a customer unless the customer puts up the full price? Most of the people who go there trade on margin. They haven't the funds to trade any other way."

"The cashier assured me that the little bank did business that way. Besides, I know that the little bank has a representative at the different exchanges. If they didn't do business for the bank there would be no occasion for their services."

"I hope you haven't lost any of your money at the little bank," said Smith, looking hard at the boy.

"No, sir, I haven't lost a cent there," replied Dick, quite truthfully.

He didn't consider it necessary to add that he had won over \$5,000 through the little bank, though he would have admitted it had the book-keeper asked him the question direct.

"That little bank ought to be put out of business, for it encourages boys and cheap clerks to risk their little money," said Smith.

"It's the regular bucket-shops that ought to be put out of business."

"I don't see any striking difference between the little bank and the rest of the brood."

"Well, you agree that the bucket-shops ought to be squelched?"

"I certainly do. They do a lot of injury to Wall Street business, and their operations give the financial district a bad name."

"Then I should think the brokers would unite in driving them out of the Street."

That ended the talk between them, and Dick went on with his work.

Next morning he received a note in the mail addressed in a female hand.

It bore the Rutherford post-mark, and Dick's heart gave a jump as he figured it must be from Miss Maitland, for he knew no other members of the sex in that neighborhood.

He opened it and read the following brief note:

"DEAR MR. DAVENPORT: I have been requested by my uncle to forward you an invitation to call at Hercules Villa next Saturday afternoon and remain over till Monday morning. The professor will see that you connect with a train that will land you in Jersey City in time for you to reach your office at your customary time. Hoping you will be able to come, in which case wire us so that the car can meet you at the station, I remain, very sincerely yours,

"ROSE MAITLAND."

"Will I go? I should remark that I will," said Dick.

When he went to lunch he wired an acceptance of the invitation to Hercules Villa, via Rutherford.

CHAPTER VII.

DEALING WITH A BUCKET-SHOP.

On Saturday Dick took the same train he had connected with on the previous occasion when he was the bearer of the package, and on his arrival at the station he found Andrew and the professor's car awaiting him.

It was a pleasant afternoon, very different from the one on which he had paid his initial visit, and the auto carried him to the villa in a short time.

This time he entered the house by the front door and was welcomed by the young lady, who took him directly to the library, where Professor Haggard gave him a very cordial reception.

After a short talk the professor showed Dick his curiosities, explaining from whence the more important had come.

After that he was introduced to the book-cases, and was permitted to handle many rare volumes.

Then he was taken outside and shown over the grounds.

One of the most interesting things Dick was shown was the steam boiler for heating the house and furnishing steam to a small engine that ran the electric light plant.

It was supplied with an automatic self-regulator which kept the steam always at whatever temperature it was set for by the clock connected with it.

"This appliance not only saves coal, but attention," explained the professor. "My man puts on coal in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, and the boiler runs itself the rest of the time. If the wind rises and causes too much draught, this shut-off closes automatically, part way or all the way, thus cutting off the extra draught, and the fire remains the same and the steam holds even, as you see by that gauge, at one pound, which is enough to heat the house and the conservatory comfortably except in the dead of winter, when it takes from a pound and one-half to two pounds. Our hour for retiring is about half-past ten. At that hour Andrew sets the indicator so that the boiler temperature during the night will remain at about 50. He also sets that pointer on the clock to 6.30, say. When that hour comes around the boiler automatically resumes its regular day pressure, and the house is as warm as customary when we get up."

"That's great," said Dick. "That attachment must have cost money to instal."

"Only \$35 attached to the boiler. It saves almost that amount of coal in one year."

"But to get electric light you have to run your boiler all year round."

"Not at all. During warm weather that small boiler there is started up about five times in a month. That runs the dynamo long enough to generate sufficient electricity in those two tubs to furnish electric light for almost a week. All the skyscrapers and other office buildings have similar storage tanks, only larger, so that when the engineer shuts down the machinery at night, the building can be lighted as far as is necessary, and still leave electric power sufficient to run one elevator."

When they returned to the library the professor turned Dick over to his niece, and they took a walk into the conservatory, where they remained most of the time until dinner.

Next day, while talking about Wall Street to the professor, Dick brought up the subject of the bucket-shops, and told all he knew about them.

He said they ought to be put out of business.

Professor Haggard agreed that if all he said about them was founded on fact, they could easily be dispensed with to the advantage of the small speculator.

Dick caught the eight o'clock train Monday morning and reached his office about nine.

That day he got a tip from a stenographer he was acquainted with who worked for a big brokerage firm.

She told him that if he wanted to make a stake, to buy H. & Y., and hold it for a rise of fifteen or twenty points.

She explained how she got hold of the tip, and Dick was satisfied it was a good one.

Having decided to plunge on it, he bought 500 shares on margin through the little bank, putting up nearly all of his money.

During the next few days the stock went down five points, and Dick began to fear he had bought too soon, for the syndicate which was cornering the stock evidently beat it down to shake out all the nervous holders.

It was not impossible, but it might fall to a point that would shake him out.

Fortunately for him no such thing happened.

The stock began to recover and went up to 95, five points higher than Dick paid for it, when it began to attract notice.

From that point it gradually rose to par, and then the boom began in earnest, and it went to 112 in one day.

Dick sold out while the excitement was at its height, and cleared \$11,000.

Two days later it was up to 116.

Dick met the young lady who gave him the tip, and gave her \$500 as a present.

"Why, Dick!" she exclaimed, in surprise, "you can't afford to give me so much as that. Besides, I didn't expect anything from you for the tip."

"I won more than you think, Miss Castle, and I feel you are entitled to that small evidence of my appreciation," he answered.

"I'm sure I'm awfully obliged to you. Some people wouldn't think of remembering me even if they did make a bunch of money."

"I'm not one of that kind. I always appreciate a good favor. Now tell me, do you think that stock will go much higher?"

"No. It is sure to drop in a day or two. It will go below par, maybe to 95."

"I suppose the syndicate has made a raft of money out of the boom?"

"I judge the members of it have. They are all of them rated as millionaires, and I dare say they will keep on getting richer as long as they remain in Wall Street."

Dick put his thinking cap in action, with the result that on the following morning he planked up \$10,000 with the little bank and directed the clerk to sell 1,000 shares of H. & Y. short for him, at the market, which opened at 116.

At noon the price was up to 118, and Dick was \$2,000 behind on his deal.

Then a bear attack broke the price and it began falling rapidly.

A panic ensued among those who were long on the stock, and they rushed their selling orders in to their brokers.

That completed the rout, and the stock fell like a stone to par.

Although it was pretty certain to go lower, Dick told the little bank to buy 1,000 shares to deliver, and when everything was cleaned up he was \$10,000 richer.

Thus inside of three weeks he made \$27,000, which, added to his former capital, made him worth \$32,000—a very fine sum for a boy of his years to possess.

Decoration Day came around, and Dick spent it at Hercules Villa, and had a fine time with Rose Maitland, who seemed to have taken a great fancy to him.

This was not strange, for Dick was the only occasional companion of her own age, almost, that she had to associate with.

About the middle of June another chance to make money came Dick's way.

He accidentally learned that a syndicate had been formed to corner and boom A. & D. shares.

He immediately bought 1,500 shares of the stock on the usual margin at 85.

When the stock began going up he went around to Skibo & Flint's bucket-shop and bought 200 shares of it, putting up \$2,000.

He was curious to see if the foxy firm could find a way to skin him out of it.

He had some difficulty in getting the bucket-shop to take his deal at ten per cent.

The chief clerk suggested that he stood to win more by going in on five per cent.

Dick wouldn't listen to him, so the clerk went in to see Flint about the deal.

Flint told him to take it.

Then A. & D. dropped to 86, but recovered and went to 90. Next day it jumped to 95.

Dick called on Skibo & Flint and said he wanted to buy 300 more shares.

The chief clerk referred the matter to Mr. Skibo.

He told the managing partner that Dick had already bought 200 shares.

Skibo told the clerk to show him into his office.

The boy marched in, wondering if the broker would recognize him as one of the three boys who had caused his tumble into the muddy hole at the corner of Exchange Place and New street that rainy morning three months back.

Skibo looked at him sharply when he entered.

"I think I've seen you before," he said; "your face looks familiar to me."

"As I work in Wall Street, it is quite possible you have," replied Dick.

"Who do you work for?"

"I'd rather not say. I don't want my boss to know I am speculating."

Skibo grinned like a hyena.

"You seem to have lots of money for a messenger. Been robbing a bank?"

"If I have I'm not giving it away," retorted Dick.

"Where did you get your money?"

"Do you always ask your customers that question?"

"No, but I'm asking you."

"I don't care to answer that question."

"Maybe you've been stealing from your employer?"

"This isn't a fair line of questioning. Are you going to buy 300 shares of A. & B. for me?"

"You're already in on 200 shares here."

"I know it, and I'd like to get in for 300 more."

"You must have a tip."

"Not necessarily. I see that the stock is going up."

"It may go down to-morrow."

"If it should that would be my funeral, not yours."

"I'd take your order, only I'm afraid you haven't come honestly by so much money. Tell me who you work for and I'll consider your deal."

"No, sir. If you don't want my order, say so."

"I'll let you go in for another 100."

"All right. Instruct your clerk to that effect."

Skibo did so, and Dick got the 100.

There wasn't much doing in A. & D. for the next two days, which wound up the week, but on Monday, after opening at 97 3-4, the stock began going up again, and at noon it hit par.

Dick began to consider about selling when he went to lunch.

The price was then 102 and a fraction.

He made a hasty meal and rushed into Skibo & Flint's office:

"I want to close out my two deals in A. & D.," he said to the clerk.

"All right," said the clerk. "Come in to-morrow and get your money."

"What's the matter with you settling now?" said Dick.

"We have to sell the stock first."

"Oh, come off. You didn't buy any stock. Bucket-shops never do."

"Well, this shop does," and he told the truth, at least so far as Dick's deals were concerned.

As Dick bought on a rising market that looked stiff, the firm had deemed it wise to buy the stock rather than risk a loss.

If Dick thought he had made anything out of Skibo & Flint, and his object in dealing there on a tip was to touch them for a wad of money, he was mistaken.

They lost nothing, though he made \$3,500, and they deducted from what was coming to him their commission and interest charges.

The firm had treated him squarely because there had been no loophole in the deal by which they could have done otherwise.

On the whole, Dick had learned nothing about the methods pursued by the bucket-shop, unless it was the bull-doing

tactics adopted toward him by Mr. Skibo on the day he made the second deal.

He went to the little bank and sold his 1,500 shares there, and his total profits on A. & D. were \$29,000.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRUGGED.

It was about this time that the trial of the two crooks, who invaded the office of Mr. Foster, as described in our second chapter, came off.

A few days before that event Dick received word from the District Attorney's office, in the form of an official paper, ordering him to be in a certain criminal court on a stated date to appear as a witness against the two men.

Bob Stevens and Jimmy Jenkins were also served with similar documents.

Dick met Bob on Broad street the day he received the paper from the hands of a policeman.

"Did a cop call on you with a subpoena for the trial on Thursday?" asked Bob.

"He sure did," replied Dick. "A fat one with a smooth face."

"That's the same cop that called on me. The other boys in the office thought I'd been doing something and he had come to pinch me," grinned Bob.

"I suppose I'll see you in court."

"You'll see me all right. A fellow has got to obey such a paper if he doesn't want to get into trouble."

"I've heard that those rascals are out on \$300 bail. As they are certain to be convicted, it'll be a wonder if they haven't jumped their bail and lighted out for parts unknown."

"If they have there won't be any trial till they are caught."

That afternoon Dick received a letter from a lawyer on Leonard street asking him to call on a matter of importance.

The boy wondered what the lawyer, who was a stranger to him, wanted.

He showed the note to Book-keeper Smith and asked him if he had better oblige the writer.

"I wouldn't pay any attention to it. It is probably from the lawyer who has been engaged to defend those men, and his object is to try and find out what you are going to testify to in court," said Smith.

"I should think he'd have a pretty good idea from the facts of the case."

"He might have some other object as well."

"What other object?"

"He might offer to buy you off."

"But I can't go back on what I testified to before the Grand Jury and at the examination of the men in the police court."

"Not very well; for that reason I wouldn't call on the lawyer."

"I won't," said Dick, and he didn't.

Next day a man came into the office and asked for him.

"That's my name," said Dick. "What can I do for you?"

"Come out here, I'd like to talk to you."

Dick went out.

"Did you receive a note from Lawyer Harris?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you call on him?"

"Because I don't know him and didn't care to call."

"He'd like to see you this afternoon."

"About what?"

"A matter of importance."

"What is the matter?"

"He'll tell you when you call."

"I don't think he will, for I'm not going to call."

"What's your objection?"

"Because I judge he is the lawyer for the two men I am going to appear against to-morrow."

"What are you going to testify to?"

"You have no right to ask me that."

"You might find it to your interest to go easy with the accused."

"How?"

"It would be \$100 in your pocket."

"Are you offering me a bribe?"

"Oh, no," said the visitor, hastily. "I am merely hinting what you might make if you saw things in the right light."

"I see things only in the light in which they happened. Those rascals came in here and one of them intimidated me with a revolver while the other bound me. Then they went to

the safe and took all the money that was in it. They'd have got away with it if two friends of mine hadn't come in at the time and cut off their escape. It was a clear case of burglary that failed to go through."

The whole affair was only a joke, and you ought not to be hard on them."

"A joke, eh? They'll find it no joke in court."

"Then you are going to push the case?"

"Mr. Foster is pushing the case. I'm only one of the witnesses."

"But if you let up on——"

"I'm going to tell the truth. If the jury thinks it was only a joke they'll get off."

"Don't you think you could make it appear as a joke?"

"No, I don't, because I know it wasn't any joke."

"Wouldn't \$100 make you see things differently?"

"You can't bribe me worth a cent. You couldn't buy me off with \$1,000. You had better go, for I don't want to talk to you any longer."

So the man went away, but he intimated that Dick would regret his refusal to compromise the matter.

The boy paid no attention to the implied threat and went on with his work.

When Dick started for the ferry at five o'clock he did not suspect that he was shadowed by a man who had been waiting outside the building for him to appear.

This man followed him all the way to his home and spotted the house.

After supper Dick left the house to attend an entertainment with a friend.

An hour later a cab drove up to the corner and a man got out and went to the Davenport house.

His ring was answered by one of Dick's sisters.

"Is Richard Davenport at home?" the visitor asked.

"No, sir," replied the girl.

"Do you expect him home soon?"

"No. He went to an entertainment and I don't believe he'll be home before eleven."

"All right. You can tell him Mr. Smith called."

"Mr. Smith. Are you the book-keeper and cashier at Mr. Foster's office?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I will tell him in the morning, as I hardly think I'll be up when he gets home."

The man bowed and walked away.

He returned to the cab and held a talk with another man in the vehicle.

In a few minutes the cab drove slowly away and finally stopped before a cafe downtown.

From the cafe the cab went to a billiard and pool parlor, where the men got out again and the cab drove off.

At half-past ten the cab was back to the pool parlor, and shortly afterward the two men came out, got in and the vehicle returned to the corner near the Davenport house.

The man who called at the house got out and stood beside the door talking with his companion inside.

It was then eleven o'clock and the street was deserted and quiet.

Half an hour passed away and then Dick came up the street.

As he passed the cab he glanced at it.

The man left the door of the vehicle and confronted the boy.

"Lawyer Harris would like to speak with you a few minutes," he said.

Dick stopped, looked at the man and recognized him as the party who had called on him at the office that morning.

"I don't want to see Lawyer Harris," he said. "I gave you my answer this morning."

"I know you did, but Harris wants to speak to you. He won't detain you but a few minutes, and I think it will be to your advantage to hear what he has to say."

Dick hesitated and then went to the door of the cab.

"Harris, this is Davenport," said the man on the outside.

"Step in, young man, I want to talk to you," said the bearded man inside.

"No; say what you have to say, and I will listen to you. It is half-past eleven and I want to get home."

"Well, step half way in. I don't want the driver to hear my words," said the man inside.

Dick placed one foot on the step and leaned forward.

The bearded man then offered him \$250 to keep out of the trial that was to come on next day.

"Your offer is declined. It's a bribe, and were I to accept it I'd put myself in a nice hole with the authorities. I am surprised that you, a lawyer, should make me such an offer."

You'll have to defend your clients as best you can," said Dick.

"Very well," said the bearded man. "We'll have to keep you out of the case."

The man outside gave Dick a shove which sent him into the arms of the man inside, and, grabbing his legs, pushed them in and shut the door.

Dick put up a struggle to get free, but the man inside held him by one arm with a vise-like grip and pressed a cloth over his face.

The boy's senses grew confused and his head swam.

His struggles grew feebler, and in a moment or two he became unconscious.

By that time the cab was rolling away from the neighborhood with the other man on the box with the driver.

CHAPTER IX.

IN A STRANGE SITUATION.

Morning had come around when Dick awoke from his stupor and found himself in a strange place—a small room, supplied with a bunk on which he lay, and so narrow that by stretching out his arm he could almost touch the door facing him.

The bunk lay against the wall, like a sleeping-car berth. Dick sat up and looked around him in surprise.

How came he in that place?

Then the event of the night floated across his not over clear brain, and gradually pieced itself together.

He began to understand that he had been drugged and carried off in the cab, and brought to this room, which seemed rather unsteady, as if it were in motion.

The room was almost dark, and the air was close.

He could see objects pretty well because his eyes were accustomed to the gloom, and he could perceive the outline of the door, with a light streak of light running underneath it.

As he started to spring out of the bunk he found that his legs were tied with a rope that was fastened to something.

He reached for the rope and found that another rope was tied under his arms and permitted him to move only a foot or two.

His arms were free.

Clearly he was a prisoner.

"This is a nice situation for those rascals to put me in. Somebody is going to get into trouble over it all right. I have been abducted, and that is a serious crime for that Lawyer Harris to be up against. Well, I can't do anything to help myself as things are. I seem to be aboard some kind of a vessel which is sailing along somewhere. I'll have to wait until I am released," said Dick to himself.

Dick threw up his hands like a person stretching, and his left hit something that had a metallic feeling.

It was fixed in the wall.

Wondering what it was, the boy fumbled at it and it came open, disclosing a round hole with a thick glass in it, through which flashed the sunshine, lighting up the little room.

It was a vessel's dead eye, or small, round window.

It worked on hinges, like the inside covering, and Dick opened it.

A refreshing breeze blew in that felt fine in that close room.

Dick was now able to see all around him, and though he was not accustomed to vessels, he realized that he was in a small, plain stateroom.

"So it's morning," he thought. "My folks must be wondering what has become of me. My unused bed will show I was not in the house all night. They'll think I passed the night with my friend Brown. That will keep them from worrying, though they might telephone over to the office, and when they learn I am not there then they'll be up in the air. Well, I can't help it. I am here against my will, and I haven't the least idea where I am being taken to. I wish one of those men would come and throw a little light on the situation."

As if in answer to his wish a key was turned in the lock, the door opened and a young fellow with a tough look glanced into the stateroom.

"Hello, you're awake, are you?" he said.

"Yes, I'm awake. I hope you've come to release me from these ropes. It isn't pleasant to be penned in a bunk this way," said Dick.

The fellow grinned.

"You don't like it, eh?" he said.

"Would you?" returned the Wall Street boy.

"Are you feeling hungry?"

"I guess I could eat something," said Dick, who had a healthy appetite.

"I'll let the boss know you've come around," said the young chap starting to leave.

"Hold on," said Dick.

"What now?"

"I'm on some vessel, ain't I?"

"You ought to know that you are."

"What kind of craft is it?"

"You'll find out later."

"I suppose there is no use of my asking where she is going?"

"No use at all."

"Who's the boss—Lawyer Harris?"

The young man grinned again.

"No such person on board."

"Some friend of Duncan and Colby, then, who are to be tried to-day."

"He'll tell you who he is when he sees you, perhaps."

"Well, run along and send him in."

Fifteen minutes passed, then the door opened again and the same young fellow appeared with a tray of food.

"Here's your breakfast," he said. "Beefsteak, fried potatoes, bread and coffee. Looks good, doesn't it? Eat hearty. I'll come back for the tray in fifteen or twenty minutes. Then maybe you'll see the boss."

He placed the tray across Dick's lap and went away.

Dick couldn't find any fault with the food, and, being hungry, he ate up everything in sight.

In about twenty minutes the tough lad came back and got the tray.

Ten minutes later the bearded man who drugged Dick came in.

Dick identified him as the man who represented himself as Lawyer Harris.

He wasn't the lawyer, however.

The legal gentleman knew better than to engage in any trick that would bring him within the pale of the law, for lawyers are apt to suffer more for misdeeds of that kind than others.

As a matter of fact, this was Duncan, one of the crooks who were scheduled to be tried that day, and Colby, the other, was also on board.

Each was out on \$300 bail, which would be forfeited, but that wasn't worrying them.

They knew there would be no trial that day, as three witnesses had been taken care of.

The case would have to go over, and they hoped their lawyer would be able to get the indictments squashed.

"How are you feeling this morning, Davenport?" asked Duncan.

"I'd feel better if you would release me from these ropes," replied Dick.

"That will come later."

"Are you Lawyer Harris?"

"I'm not saying whether I am or not."

"You are the boss on board this vessel?"

"I am the boss. If you had accepted my terms you wouldn't be here now."

"I couldn't accept such terms. What are you going to do with me?"

"Give you a short vacation till the case is settled."

"I may be the chief witness, but there are two others."

"They've been taken care of."

"Do you mean to say that you bought them off? I don't believe it."

"I said they've been taken care of."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Never mind. It doesn't concern you. You have your own troubles."

"When are you going to let me out of this room?"

"When I get ready."

"What did you come in here to say to me?"

"Nothing in particular. I just came to see how you were. It is too late now for further dealing between us. You had your chance yesterday. That's all I've got to say at present."

The bearded man walked out and locked the door.

"I know no more now than I did at first," thought Dick. "I see I'm to be kept in the dark as to the intentions of my captors. I wonder what time it is?"

Dick felt for his watch, more than half expecting to find it gone, though it had no great intrinsic value.

It was in his vest pocket.

Looking at it, he saw it was nine o'clock.

He wound his time-piece up and returned it to his pocket.

At that moment he heard a noise near the foot of his bunk. The sound came from the floor and was like a bump.

A section of the floor, about the size of a small trap-door moved up a couple of inches and then fell back.

A short silence followed, then Dick saw the piece of floor rise slowly.

A hand grasped it and pushed it up higher.

Then a head appeared.

The trap turned over and Dick saw the face of a boy.

To his astonishment he recognized Bob Stevens.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESCAPE.

"Bob, is that you?" cried Dick.

"Is this where you are, Dick?" replied Bob.

"Yes. You are the last person I expected to see on this vessel. So the rascals got hold of you, too."

"As slick as a whistle. And Jimmy, too."

"Is Jimmy on board?"

"Down in the hold with me."

"They didn't tie you chaps?"

"Yes, they did, but I got loose and started to investigate. I knew you were aboard, and I wondered where they had you. I discovered this trap by accident. I bumped my head against the deck and felt the wood give way. Then I found I had lighted on a trap. I opened it to see where it led to, and, as luck would have it, I have struck you."

"Come up and cut me loose. My feet are tied to the foot of the bunk, and a rope under my arms holds me to the head of it."

Bob listened and then pulled himself up out of the trap.

"It won't do for you to get loose yet a while. It might spoil my scheme for us to get away. I'll look at the ropes and fix them so you can free yourself, but you mustn't do anything till you hear from me again. We're out on the Atlantic off the south shore of Long Island. The boat is bound for some island in Great South Bay, where we are to be kept till further notice. There are four men aboard, and if we are going to give them the slip we must work slowly about it, and not until the boat gets to the island."

Bob loosened both ropes so Dick could slip the noose off his feet at will, after which he would have no trouble freeing himself of the other noose.

"Now I'll get back into the hold and let Jimmy know I've located you," said Bob. "I don't think it will be well for you to make a move till you hear from me again. I've got the run of the hold and hope to find a way for the three of us to escape."

"If we could capture the four men it would be a feather in our caps," said Dick. "What sort of craft is this?"

"It's a large sloop-yacht. They probably stole her from her moorings at one of the upper docks on the East River."

"It's a wonder they didn't sail her into the Sound instead of following the course they have."

There was a sound outside the door at this moment, and Bob beat a hasty retreat through the trap-door.

Nobody came into the little stateroom, however, and Dick lay back much pleased that his friends Bob and Jimmy were on board to help him out of his scrape if luck ran their way.

Two hours passed and nothing happened.

The yacht made good headway under all sail, and by this time had passed into Great South Bay, through the inlet, and had tacked to the westward to make the group of islands which filled up that end of the bay.

These islands were for the most part without inhabitants, and only visited by fishermen as a rule.

The man with the beard came in to take another look at Dick.

"You're having an easy time of it lying there and doing nothing," he said, with a grin. "You ought to feel obliged to us for giving you a rest from work."

"I'd feel more obliged to you if you told me what your plans are," said Dick.

"Our plans are to ship you and your friends off to sea this evening. Then you'll be out of the way for a while to come."

"How are you going to do it?"

"At present we're in Great South Bay. We're going to lie low till dark, and then we're going to put into the Atlantic and wait for a certain bark, the skipper of which has agreed to take you chaps aboard and make sailors of you. How do you like the prospect?"

"I hope you are only kidding me, for I don't like it."

"No, there is no kidding about it. It is necessary for our safety that you should be kept out of New York for a while, and that's the easiest and best way we know of keeping you away long enough to insure our safety."

The man's words opened Dick's eyes as to his real identity.

He saw that he was not Harris, the lawyer, but one of the crooks disguised, and he readily singled him out as the fellow who had threatened him with the revolver in the office.

He did not let on that he recognized the man for fear it might lead to unpleasant results.

"I think that's a rascally trick," he said.

"You can thank yourself for it. We offered you the chance to do the right thing, but you turned it down, and you have to suffer the consequences."

Dick made no reply, and Duncan, having said all he cared to, walked out.

Time passed on and the sloop reached the islands and came to anchor in a cove on the eastern end of the largest one.

The sails were lowered and nothing but her bare mast could be noticed from the bay.

Dinner was served at one o'clock, and after the four rascals had had theirs the prisoners were fed.

It was about two by Dick's watch when Bob reappeared up the trap.

Dick told him what the crook had mapped out as their fate.

"Don't worry. We'll get away before they start to leave the bay. I've found a way through the hold, but it won't do for us to make a move until after dark," said Bob.

"Have you found out where we are lying?" asked Dick.

"Yes. At one of the islands in the bay. There are several other islands around us. It's a good place for the sloop to avoid discovery."

"What way have you found to get out of the hold?"

"There's a door leading into the cook-room forward. It's bolted on the other side, but the bolt is so loose that it can easily be moved back and forth. I've been out that way and peeked out of the open scuttle. That's how I found out where we are. When I returned to the hold I worked the bolt partly into place again."

"How did you light on the door?"

"Because the chap who brought us our meals did not come down through the hatch, so I knew there must be another way of coming into the hold."

"Good boy. How close is the sloop to the island?"

"She's in a cove within a few feet of the shore."

"I suppose we'll have to swim those few feet?"

"If the tide is low we may be able to wade the distance."

"If they discover our escape they'll hunt for us."

"We ought to be able to keep out of their way in the dark. If they discover us we'll have to fight."

"That won't do much good if they're armed."

"We'll have to trust to luck. The principal thing will be to get a good start."

After some further talk Bob went back into the hold.

The afternoon passed slowly away—an awful long afternoon to Dick.

Six o'clock came around, and a light supper was had by the four rascals, and a portion of it given to the prisoners.

Shortly afterward darkness fell and Dick awaited Bob's signal.

It was delayed so long that he grew impatient.

From the sounds he heard in the cabin he judged that the men were in there playing cards.

Three of them were, but the fourth was cleaning up in the cook-room, and Bob was waiting for him to leave.

Nothing could be done until he did.

Finally he walked aft and entered the cabin.

Bob slipped the bolt and entered the dark cook-room.

The scuttle was wide open to air the place.

Bob looked out and saw that the deck was deserted.

The time had come for them to make their escape.

He rushed back, freed Jimmy, and, poking his head up the trap, called to Dick.

That lad lost no time getting rid of his bonds and sliding down into the hold, where he was greeted by Jimmy.

"We must peel off our duds," said Bob, so they peeled.

Then they entered the cook-room with their clothes rolled up in bundles.

Bob slid overboard first and found the water up to his armpits.

Holding his garments above his head, he waded to the shore.

Dick and Jimmy followed, but the latter being short in stature, the water came up to his chin.

As soon as they had landed they got into their clothes with all expedition.

"Shall we go straight ahead or follow the shore?" said Dick.

"I guess we had better go straight ahead," said Bob.

They found the island bigger than they expected, and well wooded.

"They'll never find us in this wood," said Jimmy, elated at the prospect ahead.

"I hope not," said Dick. "But we're not going to stay here until we have looked the island over. We may find a better hiding-place."

They kept on till they reached the opposite end, and saw the dark surface of the water before them, and a blot against the sky, which indicated another island a little way off.

A dark object lay on the shore near the water's edge.

Jimmy ran over to see what it was.

"Hey, fellows, this is a boat," he cried.

They immediately joined him, and felt like shouting when they saw it was a skiff with one oar in it.

As it was not tied by its short painter, they judged that it had drifted to the island and the tide was holding it there.

"This is great luck," said Dick. "We'll be able to get clear off now."

The boat was just large enough to hold the three of them comfortably.

Bob stood up in the stern and, using the oar to scull the boat, he pushed off and made for the island ahead.

They made slow headway, but the distance they had to go was not great, and they reached the other island in about fifteen minutes.

Dick and Jimmy landed and kept abreast of the boat as Bob poled it along till they rounded a projecting point.

Then Bob landed and tied the boat, and they looked around for a spot where they could pass the night in partial shelter.

They were so fortunate as to light upon a small dilapidated fisherman's hut that was barely large enough to afford shelter for the three, but it had no floor other than the dry sand.

On the principle that any port is welcome in a storm, they took possession of it and stretched themselves out.

For a while they talked gleefully over their successful escape, and the consternation it would create among their late captors when they discovered that their prisoners had disappeared, then Bob and Jimmy fell asleep, leaving Dick to follow their example.

CHAPTER XI.

BACK IN THE CITY.

Dick did not find it easy to imitate his two friends.

The sand was much harder than the spring mattress to which he was accustomed.

The sides and roof of the hut were full of holes, through which he could see glimpses of the sky and an occasional star.

The night was not bright, owing to the many patches of thin clouds which were drifting across the firmament.

Dick finally got up and went outside.

He strolled along the northern side of the island and suddenly came upon a small sloop-yacht in a little cove.

The cabin was brightly lit up, and as the door was wide open he heard a word now and then from the persons inside.

He decided to go aboard and tell his story, and ask to be taken off the island with his two companions when the craft sailed:

He returned to the place where the skiff was moored, and rowed around to the yacht.

Tying the boat's painter, he stepped aboard and went to the door.

Four well-dressed men were seated around the table, drinking, smoking and talking.

He recognized one of them as Jason Skibo, the king of the bucket-shops.

He drew back, doubting if his reception would be a cordial one.

While figuring on what he should do, he heard the talk of the men inside very plainly.

The subject of their conversation riveted his attention, and he listened eagerly to it.

From what he heard he soon learned that one of the other three was Flint, the partner of Skibo, and that the other two were brokers interested in the bucket-shop business.

Gradually he gathered the information that a syndicate of brokers was back of the whole bucket-shop industry, and that the combine controlled all the different concerns that Dick had heretofore supposed to be independent enterprises.

The names of several of the brokers connected with the

syndicate came out in the course of the talk, and Dick made a note of them for future reference.

He was securing news that few people in Wall Street were acquainted with, and if given out was sure to create something of a sensation.

He learned further that the bucket-shop syndicate was about to spring a surprise on the Street.

Plans had been perfected for cornering the shares of the Lycoming Short Line, a stock which was selling low in the market at that time, and booming it as high as it could be forced by clever jugglery.

It was to be pushed up six or seven points at first to get the customers of the different bucket-shops interested, and to induce them to buy it on the usual marginal basis.

Word was to be passed around among the speculators that the stock was to be boosted at least twenty points, and that this was their opportunity to make a rich haul out of the shops.

As soon as the customers had placed their bets, and had brought in their friends to participate in cutting up the melon, the price was to be suddenly forced down ten points and all the accounts wiped out as clean as a whistle.

This would be just like finding a big bunch of money, then the stock was to go up again as fast as possible.

If enough customers came in again on the rise to pay for another slump, it would be engineered, otherwise the price would keep on advancing, and when the time was ripe the syndicate would begin to unload on the general public and take profits.

The two brokers present, as well as Skibo and Flint, regarded the scheme as a sure winner, and they were very jolly over the prospect ahead.

If they had known that a listener was taking in all of their plans they would not have felt so gay.

Dick learned that the individual members of the syndicate had been buying Lycoming Short Line on the quiet for several days, and had already accumulated many thousand shares.

The quartette in the cabin thought it would take about ten days more to get hold of enough to make their grip on the stock pretty secure.

A hundred thousand shares of stock of the road had been issued and sold at about 90, but only about 45,000 shares were on the market at the outside.

The balance was held by the people who were in control of the line, and the syndicate could count on it not coming out to interfere with its plans.

After hearing all he deemed it prudent to listen to, Dick got into the skiff, shoved off and returned to the place where he embarked.

Bob and Jimmy were still sleeping soundly, and Dick lay down again.

But with his brain filled with the information he had picked up on the yacht, it was not easy for him to get to sleep.

He decided that he would buy 3,000 shares of Lycoming Short Line right away and leave an order with the little bank to sell him out if the price went up five points.

Then after the slump he would go in to the tune of 5,000 shares.

In the midst of his calculations he dropped off to sleep.

The sun was up when the boys awoke.

Bob stepped outside first and looked around.

There was nothing in sight but the water and several small islands ahead.

Dick and Jimmy followed.

The former said nothing about the small yacht he had been aboard of the night before, because his two friends would want to know why he hadn't made their presence on the island known to the people on the craft, and asked for transportation to some place where they could get a train for New York.

"The question is how far we will have to row before we can reach some place where we can get within walking distance of the railroad," said Bob.

"That all depends on just where we are," said Dick.

"We're among the islands on the western end of Great South Bay, of course," said Bob.

"I take that for granted, but we don't know which of the four inlets the sloop took to reach the bay."

"The nearest, I should think."

"Jones' Inlet is the nearest. That's about four miles from Long Beach, which is the terminus of a branch railroad. But there is another inlet about three miles further to the east, and still another about three miles more. Either of these would take the sloop among the islands, which stretch along on either side of Oyster Bay for about fifteen miles."

The boys tried to figure the matter out by basing their calculations on the time the sloop had been sailing.

Bob said he and Jimmy were brought aboard the boat early in the evening.

She was then lying at an East River wharf.

"She started down the river right away," he said. "I suppose she went over to Jersey City to get you aboard. I have no idea when she got there nor when she left, but it was some time after midnight, for you were not captured until half-past eleven, and it took the cab half an hour, I guess, to reach the landing the sloop put in at. She did not reach the island behind us until noon. She ought to have sailed fifty or sixty miles from the time she left Jersey City. Is it that distance to Jones' Inlet?"

"I don't know how far it is, but I guess it's as far as that," said Dick.

"Well, if this island is near Jones' Inlet, how far is it to Long Beach?"

"About five miles."

"We can't be over ten miles from the beach if the sloop took one of the other inlets, so let's start. It won't take us so long to cover that distance."

"You forget we have only one oar, and sculling is slow work."

At that moment Jimmy gave a shout and pointed to the yacht that was coming around the northern side of the island.

He and Bob thought it was the sloop that had carried them away from New York.

Dick recognized it as the one the bucket-shop people were aboard of.

He ran out to the end of a little point and shouted at the helmsman.

"What do you want?" came back from the man.

"We want to get off this island," cried Dick.

The yacht was thrown up in the wind and a boat was sent for the boys.

"How came you on this island?" asked the boat-steerer.

"It's too long a story to tell you here. Take us aboard and we'll explain everything to your skipper," said Dick.

The boys were taken off to the yacht, and in a few minutes the little craft pulled away for the inlet ahead.

"Hello, it's you, is it?" said Skibo, as the boys, led by Dick, came over the side.

"Happy to meet you again, Mr. Skibo," said Dick, politely.

"Huh! How came you and your friends to be marooned on that island?"

"Well, sir, you see we are witnesses against two crooks who were to be tried yesterday. The crooks, who have jumped their bail, captured us with the aid of some friends and carried us off here on a big sloop which I fancy they stole. The sloop was anchored on the eastern side of the island beyond that one. When it got dark we made our escape to the shore, found a skiff with one oar and sculled over to that island, where we put in the night. We were about to put off in the skiff again when this yacht came in sight around the island. I hailed you because I thought maybe you were bound for the city, and we'd like to get there as soon as we can. If you don't care to carry us, we'll consider it a favor if you'll land us close to Long Beach. We can get a train there for Brooklyn."

Flint and the two brokers listened to Dick's story with some interest.

They thought it a rather extraordinary story, but did not doubt but the boy spoke the truth.

"Where is the sloop with the crooks now?" asked Skibo.

"She may be anchored in the same place, or she may have hoisted anchor and sailed away as soon as the crooks found out we had made our escape," said Dick.

"You want to return to New York, you say?"

"We can't get there any too quick. Our parents are doubtless worrying a good bit over our absence. It is natural they would."

"Well, we are going straight there, and you can remain aboard, but you'll have to stay forward with the hands," said Skibo.

"That is satisfactory to us," said Dick, answering for his companions as well as himself.

"I suppose you are hungry. You can have breakfast with the crew. That's all."

The boys went forward, and half an hour later were treated to a good breakfast.

While they were eating the yacht passed Long Beach, and an hour later was sailing by Far Rockaway.

It was close on to noon when the yacht ran into a dock close

to the Brooklyn Bridge pier on the Brooklyn side of the East River.

Dick thanked Skibo for bringing them to the city, and then the three boys rushed up to the entrance of the bridge and boarded a car for Manhattan.

When they reached the New York end of the bridge they hurried down Nassau street, intent on reaching their places of business.

CHAPTER XII.

BUCKING THE BUCKET-SHOPS.

"Hello, young man, where have you been since you left home night before last to go to an entertainment?" cried Book-keeper Smith when Dick rushed into the counting-room.

"Have many people been telephoning over here about me?" said Dick.

"I should say they have. They're worried to death about you."

"I'm not surprised, but I sent my mother a telegram a few minutes ago which should ease her mind."

"Well, where did you go off to so mysteriously? Why didn't you telephone word of your movements home? And you might have let us know at the same time. How is it you got out of the way just when you were wanted in court at the trial of those two rascals, who, by the way, didn't show up themselves, thereby forfeiting their bail. There was a policeman here twice yesterday looking for you. He said if the case had not been continued a warrant for your arrest would have been issued. As it is, the District Attorney's office wants to know why you didn't report in court."

Dick explained the cause of his mysterious disappearance, and why he had been unable to send word either to his home or the office.

Needless to say the book-keeper was much astonished at his story.

"You'd better telephone the facts to the District Attorney's office," he said.

"I will right away. Where is Mr. Foster?"

"He's over at the Exchange."

"How did you manage without me?"

"We had to call in a district messenger boy to run errands. It was a bit inconvenient, but I looked for you to turn up any moment."

"I turned up just as soon as I could. Just think of Skibo, the bucket-shop man, bringing us to the city on his yacht! I never expected to have him do me a favor. But then it didn't cost him anything. He was on his way back to the city, and it didn't put him out any to fetch us along."

Dick went to the 'phone and rang up the District Attorney's office.

When he got it he explained why he had been unable to show up at court.

"Bob Stevens and Jimmy Jenkins, the other two witnesses, were carried off in the same sloop," he went on. "She anchored yesterday noon close in to one of the islands not far from Jones' Inlet. We escaped soon after it got dark. Where the sloop is now I couldn't say, but the two crooks are aboard of her with two other men who are helping run the vessel. We three have just got back to the city. If you want me to call at your office, I suppose I can do so."

Dick was directed to call right away.

He told the book-keeper that he had to go to the District Attorney's office.

On his way there he stopped and got his lunch.

He was detained at the public prosecutor's office about an hour and then returned to his own office.

He took advantage of the chance to drop in at the little bank and leave his order for 3,000 shares of Lycoming Short Line.

It was the largest order the bank had received from one person since it opened up some years before.

The stock was selling for \$90 a share, and the bank had to advance \$240,000, Dick putting up \$20,000.

The little bank, not having so much ready money, had to arrange with a bigger bank to carry the stock.

The order carried with it instruction to sell if the price advanced five points.

Dick Davenport was now regarded as a person of some importance by the proprietors of the little bank, who were anxious to retain his custom.

Dick found Mr. Foster in his office when he got back, and told him his story.

"You had something of a time, young man," the broker said.

"I should say so. If these rascals really meant to send us

three to sea, and one of them told me it was their intention, we'd have been up against a rough time, and probably we would not have got back to this country for some time," said Dick.

"It was fortunate for you that you made your escape," said Mr. Foster.

When Dick got home around six he found that his mother had received his telegram, and that it had greatly relieved her mind.

At the supper table he recounted his adventure to the family, and they agreed that he had had a narrow escape from being shipped off to sea.

The morning's paper had an outline story of the kidnaping of the three boys by the crooks, and stated that the sloop was found in a Connecticut port abandoned by the rascals who had stolen it in New York.

No trace could be found of the men themselves, but the Boston police had been notified to look out for them, as it was believed they had gone to that place.

That day Lycoming Short Line advanced a point.

Next day was Saturday, and during the short session the stock went up half a point more.

On the following Wednesday it reached 95, and the little bank promptly sold the stock.

Next day Dick got his statement and check, showing he had cleared \$15,000, less interest charges and a commission of \$750.

On Friday the stock dropped with a rush to 85, according to programme, and a big bunch of speculators in all the bucket-shops were wiped out.

When the price stopped at 85, Dick called at the little bank and ordered 5,000 shares bought on his account.

This was a still bigger deal than his other one, and the cashier treated him with a great deal of respect.

The deal involved a matter of \$425,000, putting up \$50,000 and the bank the rest.

The stock was bought in small lots, and the bank's representative had some trouble in getting it all, as the syndicate brokers were also looking for it.

The price began rising again, and in a few days had reached 95 once more.

By this time the syndicate had all of the stock the members could find—a matter of 35,000 shares, Dick holding 5,000, and the other 5,000 being held by a dozen or more persons.

The remaining 55,000 shares were out of the market altogether.

Three days afterward it was up to 102.

Dick ordered the little bank to sell.

His profit this time amounted to \$85,000.

Dick decided to quit his job with Mr. Foster, rent a small office for his headquarters, and devote himself to working the market.

He was worth \$160,000, and could afford to do as he pleased.

He paid another visit to Hercules Villa and astonished the professor with the story of his Wall Street speculative successes.

The Englishman could hardly believe his statement.

"I've got every dollar of the money in my safe deposit box, and there is the key to prove I have such a box," said Dick.

"I'll take your word for it, but such luck seems incredible," said the professor.

Dick admitted that it was something way out of the ordinary.

"Remarkable things crop out once in a while, as the daily press is continually testifying," he said. "Why should I not be one of the lucky few?"

"You couldn't have done it if you were not a smart boy."

"Oh, I just grasped the opportunity when it came my way. I guess you'll find that is the secret of success with all men who reach the top."

Summer was now on and business was getting slow in Wall Street.

Dick concluded to wait for the fall before throwing up his job, for he did not expect there would be much doing in stocks till then.

One of Mr. Foster's biggest customers, after a successful coup, decided to retire altogether from the speculative field.

That decided Foster to quit himself.

He notified Dick and Mr. Smith that he was going to close down as soon as he could wind his affairs up, and then he was going to make a tour of the world with his wife.

About the middle of August Foster severed his connection with Wall Street, but he did not sell his seat in the Exchange until later.

Dick spent most of his time up to the first of September at

Hercules Villa, where he got on swimmingly with both the professor and his niece.

Then he looked around for an office and found one that suited him in one of the older buildings of Wall Street.

He hired a boy named Billy Blake to look after the office when he was out.

Billy had a sinecure, for he had very little to do except read the newspapers and story books.

Billy, however, was a smart boy who could be depended on in case of need.

As Dick did not expect to do business for anybody but himself, he hired a painter to put his name on the door without anything else.

He divided his time during September between his office and the little bank.

Many an hour he spent thinking over the bucket-shop syndicate and wondering if it would ever be broken up.

He had the names of half of the members of the syndicate, and one day he discovered that the syndicate were going to hold a meeting at the office of a certain broker who was himself a member of the combine.

He posted himself in the corridor and made a note of all who attended the meeting.

Next day he took his stand outside the Exchange and watched the brokers' entrance.

When a broker approached he had seen go into the meeting, he stopped him and asked if his name was Smith.

The trader invariably replied that his name was not Smith, but Ogilsby or some other name.

In this way Dick spotted the identity of the whole bunch.

It was at this time that Dick got another tip from Miss Castle.

She informed him that a syndicate composed of her employer and several other operators whose names she gave were cornering S. & T. shares, which were down then in the market.

This meant that the stock would be boomed when the corner had been secured.

Little had been doing in S. & T. for a year past, and nobody looked for it to go up.

Dick called on Skibo & Flint and asked to see Skibo.

He sent in his name and was admitted to the private room.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you?" asked Skibo, recognizing him as the lad who had put a former deal through his office and came out ahead on it.

Skibo never liked people to come out ahead, even though his shop lost no money on the transaction, and when they did he itched to get back at them.

So when Dick said he called to make another deal with his firm, he became interested.

"I want to buy 1,000 shares of S. & T. at the market, which is 75," said Dick.

"One thousand shares!" gasped Skibo.

"Yes, sir," returned the boy, cheerfully.

"Have you \$5,000 to put up?"

"I've got \$10,000 to put up. I'm not taking chances on a five per cent. margin. It's too risky."

As there was \$250 commission and interest charges in the deal, Skibo decided to accept it.

"Where's your money?" he asked.

"Here," said Dick, producing it.

Skibo counted the money and put the deal through.

Dick then called on each of the other five bucket-shops, and after a talk with their managers put through a similar deal in each.

These deals were duly reported to Skibo, and he nearly had a fit when he saw that Dick had bought 6,000 shares of S. & T. and put up \$60,000 on them.

"That boy must be operating for somebody with money," he thought. "Somebody who thinks he can beat the bucket-shops. I'll fool him."

He notified the head man of the syndicate of what he believed was on the tapis, and said they would have to buy the stock to protect themselves, as it was probable the person Dick was operating for, as he supposed, had a tip that the price was about to go up.

The broker went on the floor of the Exchange next day and began to bid for the stock, asking for any part of 6,000 shares at the market.

Nobody responded.

He offered 75 1-8, but none came out.

He wouldn't offer any more until he had consulted with some of the members of the combine, because the six bucket-shops had all sold the stock to Dick for 75, and anything they gave above that represented a loss of a part or all of the commission the boy had to pay.

The price remained at 75 all day, but though every member of the syndicate tried to buy the shares at 75 1-8, they couldn't get a share.

It began to look as if the stock had been cornered, and the combine began to fear they had been caught in a trap.

If the price advanced to a high figure and they couldn't get the stock to sell at that figure, they would have to pay Dick the difference between 75 and whatever the stock went to out of their own pockets.

They were not accustomed to that kind of thing.

Heretofore the money had been running into their pockets in a pretty steady stream, and it was a new sensation to them to contemplate the idea of the reverse.

A meeting was called and they met that afternoon to consider the situation.

It was decided that something must be done to break the price.

They figured out a plan and contributed a fund which they hoped would effect their purpose.

Next day one of their number offered 5,000 shares of the stock at 74.

Another member of the combine took the block.

It was simply a wash sale, but it established a quotation. The broker who sold the 5,000 offered another block at 73. Another member of the syndicate took the offer.

The first broker dropped out and another came to the front and offered 5,000 shares at 72.

This was taken like the others.

The broker in charge of the affairs of the S. & T. syndicate was a bit surprised at first, but he soon saw through the game.

He knew the brokers who were selling the stock didn't have a share to deliver, so he let the farce go on.

The price gradually went down, and the syndicate brokers hoped to force it down ten points and thus wipe out Dick's \$50,000 margin.

CHAPTER XIII.

DICK SOAKS THE BUCKET-SHOPS.

In the meanwhile, Dick sat in his office following the ticker. He was expecting to see S. & T. go up.

Instead of that it began to decline.

It dropped with the steadiness of clockwork.

He made up his mind that the syndicate which was booming the shares was doing its bearing to shake out the last of the stock, and he looked to see things presently take a turn for the better.

But they didn't.

The price dropped below 70, and then reached 69.

Things began to look serious.

The bucket-shops would all be calling on him for more margin, hoping that he could not respond, and that they would collar his deposits.

He had \$60,000 up, but he still had \$100,000 to protect his deals.

When the price reached 67 he received the calls for additional margin.

He went around to his safe deposit vault and drew \$60,000.

Before starting for the bucket-shops he returned to his office to see if his boy Billy and Jimmy Jenkins had come with the brass box, of old-fashioned design, which he had bought for Professor Haggard.

He expected to find them in the office, but they had not come.

He looked at the ticker and saw S. & T. was down to 66 1-2.

At that moment Bob came in to see him, accompanied by another messenger.

"Talk quick, Bob, I'm going out on important business," said Dick.

Before Bob could answer, the door opened and in walked Skibo and his partner, Flint.

"Hello, Davenport, we thought we'd drop up and see you."

"Good. Take seats and make yourselves at home," said Dick.

"We're not going to stay. I see that S. & T. is dropping fast. Have you received a notice from my office for more margin?"

"Yes."

"Have you responded?"

"Not yet."

"Do you expect to?"

"Why, certainly. Do you think I want to be wiped out?"

At that moment the door opened and Jimmy and Billy marched in bearing a heavy-looking box between them.

The two "sharks" who thought they had the situation in hand looked at the box uneasily.

"What is this?" asked Skibo.

"That? Oh, that's my money-chest. I have a million in it," grinned Dick.

"What are you talking about?" cried Skibo.

"Place the box down here, boys," said Dick, motioning to a spot beside his safe.

Jimmy and Billy obeyed orders.

Dick took the key out of his pocket, unlocked the box, and then taking the roll of \$60,000 out of his pocket, he made a bluff of taking it from the box.

Then he shut down the cover and locked it again.

"I guess that bunch of bills will fix the call for more margin all right. If it doesn't there's more where that came from. You can't beat this chicken, Mr. Skibo, even if you are the king of the bucket-shops, and the manager for the syndicate that runs them."

"What's that?" roared Skibo, staggered by the boy's remark. "What do you mean by a syndicate that runs them. I have only one office, and Mr. Flint is my partner."

"That won't go, Mr. Skibo. I know all about the bucket-shop combine. I have the name and am acquainted with the identity of every broker interested in the bucket-shop business. I know that the six shops are under your direct management. I know enough, in fact, to show the whole business up, and if you try any funny business with me in any of my six deals, I'll do it, and I've got the money back of me to make things hum. That's all for the present. I've got to run around to the shops now, for I see the price is down to 66."

Thus speaking, Dick hurried out, leaving every one behind him, with Bill in charge of the office.

He made the round of the six bucket-shops and put up another \$10,000 at each, thus saving the deals from being closed out as the price struck 65.

As soon as the bucket-shop brokers secured a quotation of 65 they quit their peculiar tactics, but they had not had things altogether their own way.

The lower the price dropped the more actual bidders cropped up, and some of the brokers had to sell to other brokers than their friends.

When they drew out of the crooked game they were working, the broker in charge of the S. & T. affairs began bidding the stock up again.

He quickly ran it up to 70, and the brokers who had bought from the bucket-shop traders began offering what they had purchased at a lower figure.

The S. & T. man took in what they had to offer, but he knew they could not deliver the stock and would have to settle at the market price.

Of course, the bucket-shop traders would have to settle in their turn, and they stood to lose a considerable amount.

This fact they realized when they tried to buy in to cover their few short sales.

They couldn't get the shares at all.

The price kept on up till it reached 75 again.

But it didn't stop there—it went right on to 80.

There it rested and closed at three o'clock.

Next day it resumed its upward march, and long before that the bucket-shop people realized that Dick had them caught for a bunch of money unless the unexpected happened.

They were also caught for another bunch by the brokers who had managed to buy from them when they were beating down the price for the purpose of shaking Dick out.

That scheme failed because the boy had the money to put up when called on.

The price went up to 90 that day, and the next day to 95.

Finally it reached par, and then Dick made a tour of the bucket-shops and ordered his deals closed out.

Each shop was hit for \$25,000, less the commission and interest charges, and Dick collected \$148,000 from the combine.

The syndicate lost twice as much more through its efforts to beat Dick, as the members had to settle at 95 and upward for stock sold as low as 66.

Altogether, the bucket-shop syndicate was hit for over a half a million, and the members of it felt pretty sick when they had finally settled with everybody.

As a natural consequence they felt terribly sore against Dick.

He was the cause of all the trouble.

They were satisfied he had been working on a tip, and had used it to soak the six bucket-shops.

They held a meeting to consider how they were going to get square with him.

They knew the boy had collared nearly \$150,000 of their money, and that he had as much more behind him when he started the deals.

If this was his money, they argued he was worth at least \$300,000.

Skibo, however, insisted that no boy who had lately been working as clerk and messenger for a broker could own the money Dick showed he had when he began his operations against the six bucket-shops.

"The worst of the case is that the boy has found out the truth about our business," went on Skibo. "He told me to my face that the six shops were all in a combine under my management, and that I was acting for a syndicate of brokers."

"He told you that!" cried one of the members, while the others looked greatly taken aback at the idea that their secret was known.

"He did. And, what is still worse for you people, he told me he knew the name and identity of every member of the combine."

"That must have been a bluff," said one of them.

"He didn't speak as if he was bluffing," said Skibo.

"Why didn't you tell us about it at once, then?"

"I didn't want to worry you about it at the time, for you had trouble enough on your hands. If he told me the truth he has you all where the hair is short, for as you are all members of the Exchange, you will probably be called on for an explanation if he should expose your connection with a bucket-shop syndicate."

"You must find out the extent of his information and, if possible, how he found all this out. Upon your report will depend what action we shall be forced to take. If he has us by the heels we will have to buy him off, for exposure would ruin us."

"I will do the best I can," said Skibo.

The meeting then broke up, subject to the call of the manager of the combine.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

On the following day Jason Skibo called upon Dick at his office.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Skibo. Be seated. Have a cigar?" and Dick took a box of perfectos out of a drawer in his desk and offered it to his visitor.

Skibo took one, smelt of it, and, satisfied it was a good brand, lighted up.

"I called to ask you what you meant by that statement you made to me the other day," he said, looking hard at Dick.

"Well, didn't I tell the truth?"

"No, you didn't. Skibo & Flint are in the bucket-shop business as an independent concern, just as the other shops are working for their own interests."

"I know better, Mr. Skibo. I know that a syndicate of Stock Exchange brokers owns the six bucket-shops, including the one ostensibly conducted independently by your firm. You are the working manager of the bunch, and your partner is your right bower. Each bucket-shop has a sub-manager, who is responsible to you, as you are for the running of the whole business to the syndicate. That's the truth and you know it, Mr. Skibo."

"Who told you such tommyrot as that?"

"Nobody. I found it out myself."

"Perhaps you'll explain how you did?" said Skibo, with a sneer.

"You remember that you, Mr. Flint and two brokers spent a night on your yacht in Great South Bay, anchored close to the island where you took myself and my two friends off the next morning and brought us to the city, don't you?"

Skibo nodded.

"During the night I discovered your yacht where it was moored. I took the skiff and rowed off to it with the intention of asking to be taken aboard then. The cabin was lighted up, and when I looked in I saw you, Mr. Flint and the two brokers seated around the table drinking, smoking and talking. I hesitated butting in on you, for I didn't know how I would be received. While I stood outside in doubt, your conversation reached my ears. It interested me, for it gave me points of certain things I wanted to know. I heard all you people said after I came on the scene, and you said enough to make me understand that the bucket-shops were not independent concerns, but united and owned by a syndicate of Wall Street brokers. I made a note of the two brokers with you, who I knew were members of the combine, and afterward by using them as clews I found out by degrees the names and identities of the others. There's the whole thing in a nutshell," said Dick, with a look of triumph as he noticed the blank look on Skibo's countenance.

After that explanation, which showed that Dick was fully acquainted with the bucket-shop business, Skibo could put up no further denial.

But still he was not prepared to admit anything.

"You say you know the names of the brokers whom you say are in this alleged bucket-shop syndicate?" he said.

"I do."

"Mention some of them."

Dick got up, went to his safe and took a paper out of an inner drawer.

"I have a list of them here which I think is complete," he said. "I will read it off to you."

Dick read the names and office addresses of ten brokers.

Mr. Skibo was satisfied that Dick had ferreted out the secret, and that he was in a position to give the whole business away.

"Admitting for the sake of argument that all you have advanced is true, what use are you going to make of the information?" asked Skibo, nervously.

"As soon as I have prepared my story in all its details I am going to send a typewritten copy of it to the governors of the Exchange, and if they don't act I shall send another copy to the press," replied Dick.

"Before you act in the matter, I hope you will see a committee from the interested parties."

"If the interested parties are willing to give up of their own accord I will see the committee and talk it over with them. I am not vindictive, and am not out to expose these brokers to the Exchange or the public unless forced to do so."

"Very well. I have no doubt the committee will call on you to-morrow."

Skibo got up and went away.

He called at once on the manager of the syndicate and had a talk with him.

The manager immediately sent out a call for a meeting that afternoon at his office.

At half-past three next day a committee of three waited on Dick.

They asked him what his price was to keep his hands off.

"I have no price, gentlemen. The bucket-shop business has got to go, at any rate so far as a syndicated operation backed by Stock Exchange brokers."

"What's the use of acting ugly about it. We will take you in with us and give you a share of the profits without any cutlay on your part," said one of the brokers.

"No, sir. You won't do anything of the kind. I want no connection with any combine whose profits come from the robbery of the public," said Dick.

"What do you mean by robbery?"

"Exactly what I said. You tried to rob me by beating down the price of S. & T. in order to close me out and pocket the \$60,000 I had up as margin on my six deals."

"No such thing. We were not responsible for the drop."

"I have investigated the matter and learned that you were. I got the name of every broker who engineered wash sales on that occasion, and they tally with the list of names I have of the members of the syndicate. Don't imagine I am asleep, gentlemen, when it comes to doing things."

"You seem to know everything, confound you."

"The way to know things is to do a little detective work on the quiet. That's a strong point with me. When I want to learn something I start in and try to find it out. It may take me a day, a week, a month or a year, but I get there in the end if patience and perseverance will accomplish the business."

"Then you won't make a deal with us?"

"I will not."

"We'll give you \$50,000 and an interest besides."

"I wouldn't take a million. I am out to break up a crooked game, and as I hold a full hand, I'm going to do it. The only way for you gentlemen to do if you wish to avoid exposure is to dissolve your syndicate and get out of the business. I'll give you a week to do it. If these bucket-shops are running at the end of that time I shall send my statement to the governors of the Exchange. That's all, gentlemen."

The committee went away.

The syndicate held another meeting and voted to disband and quit.

And so Dick broke up a crooked game and beat the bucket-shops.

Next week's issue will contain "FIGHTING FOR FAME; OR, THE STRUGGLES OF A YOUNG AUTHOR."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

In some parts of Russia the barrooms are run by the government. It is the rule for all males to remove their hats when in a government building, and it is ludicrous to see the patrons of the barrooms standing, hat in hand, while waiting for the barkeepers to serve their toddy.

Ernest Solvay, of Brussels, discoverer of a process for the manufacture of soda, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of that discovery by giving more than \$1,000,000 to educational and charitable institutions and the employes of his firm. The universities of Paris and Nancy each received \$100,000. Many scientists, representing all nations, are attending the jubilee celebration.

Testifying before the State Railroad Commission, San Francisco, Vice-President and General Manager Christiansen, of the Wells Fargo Express Company, declared the parcel post had caused the company to lose 31 per cent. of small packages since the first of the year. In the same period, he said, the company's revenue had been reduced 33 per cent., and this percentage, he affirmed, held good for all other express companies.

A ten-year-old Indian girl will pay the largest income tax in Oklahoma. Sarah Rector, who lives just west of Muskogee, is the girl. Her income now, it is said, is approximately \$100,000 a year. It is the old story of the lucky allottee and the oil well. Sarah is the descendant of a Creek freedman. She had nothing to do with the selection of her allotment and probably has never seen it. It is 169 acres of land, and upon it has been drilled the biggest producing well in the mid-continent field, near the town of Cushing. The well is producing over \$2,500 a day and Sarah gets one-eighth of this as her share.

The "kangaroo" vessel is an invention which is being tried in the French navy. It is so called because the idea of taking the submarine aboard may be said to be in imitation of the way in which the female kangaroo carries her young. The vessel is built so that her stern may be sunk by water ballast and the plates, framework and beams removed from the bow. This manipulation reveals a large chamber into which the submarine may be driven. The bow is then sunk, also by water ballast. The submarine slides into its traveling dry dock and a reverse series of manipulation brings the "kangaroo" back into position for a voyage.

Because of the robbery of the patrolmen who were formerly sent with the pay envelopes for the city laborers, the city of Detroit, Mich., has forestalled further hold-ups by installing a pay car of unique design. It is an automobile, strongly built with inclosed body and barred windows. The entrance, which is in front, is guarded by two armed patrolmen, one of whom drives the car as well. The interior is conveniently arranged for paying off the

men, and the cashier sits at a swivel chair with his compartments full of indexed envelopes on either side, and a small paying ledge in front where the men line up to receive their wages. The car is the first of its kind, but will probably not be the last, as it seems to meet a public need.

A man believed by the police to be John Hawkins, sixty-eight years old, of Erie, Pa., committed suicide by jumping into the Niagara River from the lower steel arch bridge the other afternoon. The bridge spans the river just above the start of the whirlpool rapids and is two hundred feet above the water. The man sat on the rail for several minutes, looking at the turbulent waters. No one was within one hundred yards of him. When men ran toward him he leaped and his body shot downward, turning over and striking the water head first. He came to the surface once before the white foam of the big drift closed over him. The suicide was the first from the lower arch bridge in three years. Hawkins was pulled from the bridge railing, but he convinced his captors then that he was not bent on suicide.

One of the most interesting demonstrations in beef and milk production ever conducted in America is to be staged at the North Oaks Farm of James J. Hill, near St. Paul. Those in charge of the experiment assert it will revolutionize the beef and milk industry in this country and prove to the farmers and stockmen that beef raising and milk production can become one of their most profitable ventures. This demonstration is to be carried on with a herd of twenty-nine dual-purpose cattle which have been purchased in Great Britain by Professor Thomas Shaw, formerly of the Minnesota Agricultural College. It is said to be the first importation of milking Shorthorn cattle ever made to this country. In this herd are twenty-six cows and three bulls. The animals arrived at Quebec recently, and will be shipped to Minnesota as soon as they are released from Quarantine, in thirty days.

F. L. Vance, "the wild rice king" of the Popple River country, has commenced the manufacture of rice flour from the products of the shallow lakes of Northern Minnesota. For years Mr. Vance has made a business of harvesting wild rice and has built up a market. The flour will be manufactured at the Anderson grist mill at La Prairie, special machinery for the purpose being installed. Before being ground the rice must go through a roasting or drying process and this is done near where the grain is harvested. A machine devised and built for this purpose by Mr. Vance is capable of roasting 1,200 pounds in six minutes. As far as known this is the first time an attempt has been made to manufacture flour from wild rice. The raw material is plentiful and practically the only cost will be the gathering and grinding, no seeding or soil preparation being necessary.

AN IRISH ROBINHOOD

OR,

THE HEROES OF THE BRIDGE

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER I.

THE IRISH OUTLAW OF THE SHANNON AND HIS MERRY MEN.

Along toward the close of the seventeenth century Ireland was in a fearful state of excitement and disorder.

James Stuart, the cowardly king of England, who had been driven from his throne by William, Prince of Orange, had fled to the Green Isle, to claim the aid of the Irish subjects in regaining his crown.

With more bravery than wisdom the Irish chiefs espoused the cause of the ungrateful Stuart, who fled from the battle of the Boyne ere that struggle was half decided.

After that famous battle was won by the Prince of Orange his generals laid waste the county far and near, besieging several of the Irish cities and towns still holding out for the English fugitive king who had deserted them in the hour of trial.

Among the strongholds thus besieged was the town of Athlone, one of the most central points in all Ireland.

While a greater portion of the Irish peasants of the time fought under their recognized leaders and chiefs, many of them joined the roving bands of outlaws who infested the woods and the mountains.

Some of the leaders of those bands were reduced Irish gentlemen, who had lost their estates while fighting the battles of the graceless Stuarts, while others were simply lawless adventurers, such as were to be found in every country in time of war and rapine.

Soon after the battle of the Boyne, the victorious English army appeared before Athlone and demanded its surrender.

Colonel Grace was the name of the Irish commander who held the place at the time, and he replied by firing his pistol in the air, as he exclaimed:

"These are my terms; these only will I give or receive. When my provisions are consumed, I will defend my trust until I have eaten my boots."

And the gallant Irish commander kept his vow to the letter.

General Douglas, who commanded the English forces, battered away at the fortress for eight days and nights, but the Irish fought so well in return that he was compelled to retreat under cover of the night.

In the following summer Athlone was again attacked by a powerful English army under the lead of General Ginkel, one of the ablest of King William's commanders.

General St. Ruth, a brave but unfortunate French leader, commanded the French and Irish troops encamped in the vicinity at the time.

On the approach of the English army, the main body of St. Ruth's forces retired to the western side of the Shannon, but several of the roving Irish bands remained in the woods on the eastern banks, in order to annoy and attack the scouting parties and foragers of the enemy.

It is with one of these bands and their daring leader that we have to do at present, as well as with two travelers who will play important parts in our story.

The evening sun was shining on the Shannon water at a point about five miles above Athlone.

Back from the pleasant river, on the eastern side, ran a dense wood, which stretched away to the road leading from Dublin, and along the banks to the fortified town, where the English army was encamped.

Along the Dublin road galloped two riders on jaded horses, one of whom stared back every now and again with anxious eyes, as he muttered aloud:

"If we could but gain the wood, we may defy them yet, but they do close on us at a fearful pace indeed."

"Is the wood far away, kind friend?" asked the other rider, who appeared to be a mere lad.

"About two miles, I take it, and it lies to the right of us. We cannot pass through the English lines before Athlone, but we should be able to strike a ford on the upper stream."

"Your steed is falling fast," said the lad, "and he cannot last much longer. Is that the wood I see now?"

"Yes—yes," cried the man, urging on his faltering steed. "Oh, could we but reach its depths, and you will be safe."

And the man set spurs to his faltering steed.

The jaded animal galloped on for some distance, while both riders kept their eyes fixed on the wood before them.

On after the fugitives thundered five horsemen in full battle array, their bright helmets, breast-plates and naked swords flashing in the fading sunlight, as the foremost cried:

"Press on—press on and capture them ere they reach the wood. Ha! one of the horses is down and his rider with him."

The horse was down in the middle of the road, bearing his rider with him.

But the man was up an instant after, and out flew his

sword as he took his stand behind the fallen animal, as he cried out to the lad:

"Press on to the wood and I will hold them back the while. Keep to the right and you will gain a ford. Ride on, I say."

The youth did ride on, crying:

"Kind friend, fly on foot and you will yet reach the wood with me. Oh, mercy, they are on him now! Oh, would to heaven I could strike in his behalf!"

The foremost of the riders was charging down on the single man, as he cried:

"Surrender, Irishman, and we will give you fair quarter. 'Tis the other we seek."

"Then you will seek him in vain, while I can strike at you. I strike for St. Ruth and the lawful king."

The fallen horse formed a rampart in front of the brave man, and the leader of the pursuers endeavored to force his own animal over the obstruction, as he cried:

"More fool you to fight for the coward who has deserted you."

The man on foot struck at the animal's head as he was clearing the obstruction, and down went horse and rider.

The next horseman was spurring to the leap, when an arrow struck him in the neck, and he fell on the roadside, the horse springing on over the living rampart.

Darting at the horse's head, the Irishman seized the bridle and vaulted on its back with great agility, crying:

"Bless the hand that drew that bow!"

The words were scarcely uttered when another arrow pierced the third rider in the right arm, and the uplifted sword fell from his grasp, as he cried:

"An ambuscade—an ambuscade! We are assailed by unseen foes."

"By one only," yelled a loud voice, as a man on foot dashed out of the wood. "Have at the others with the steel, fellow countrymen."

The moment the fugitive was mounted on the army's horse he wheeled around, and he was charging back against the others when his unknown ally dashed out of the wood.

The two English horsemen who had remained uninjured had turned to flee, fearing an ambuscade in force, but when they saw but one man emerging from the wood they turned again to the encounter.

One of them made at the fugitive, now on horseback again, while the other rode at the stranger from the wood, crying:

"Did you shoot those arrows, knave?"

"That I did, poltroon, and I'll meet you now with the sword."

"Then I'll avenge my fallen friends by cleaving your ugly head in two."

The mounted soldier made a fierce cut at the stranger, who received the blow on his own weapon, as he retorted:

"You may be a good butcher, but you are not a good swordsman. Down to the dust with you, I say."

The rider did smite the dust on the instant, and away galloped his charger, making for the wood beyond.

The mounted Irishman was equally successful with his opponent, as he soon disarmed him and sent him reeling to the ground.

He was then turning to his friend from the wood, when the latter cried:

"Away with us, as fresh foes appear in front. Who is that churl who left you alone here when your horse fell?"

"He is but a mere lad, and he never drew his sword in battle yet."

The stranger from the wood sprang on one of the English horses and led the way to the cover, just as a cloud of dust in front announced the approach of fresh mounted foes.

The fugitive lad had drawn up on the edge of the wood to witness the fight, and to await the coming of his victorious friend.

That friend was a young man in the prime of life, with a pale, expressive face, and a tall, active form, who was dressed in the garb of a student.

As the two men rode side by side toward the wood on the right, the student stranger looked earnestly at his rescuer, as he said to himself:

"This is a savage-looking creature, but he fights like a hero, and he uses his bow and arrow with great skill. As he is Irish, he must needs befriend us."

The "savage-looking creature" was also eyeing the other carefully, as he muttered below his breath:

"Can this be the man I was on the lookout for? While he appears like a book-worm, he uses his sword like a Trojan. I will soon find out."

The student stranger commenced to thank his new friend for his timely assistance, when the other interrupted him in rough tones, crying:

"If you are Irish, as I take you to be, don't bother me with thanks. If you are English you won't have much to thank me for."

"I am Irish, and I ride to Athlone to join St. Ruth, brave friend."

"Whence come you?"

"From old Dunleary."

"Do you know that the road to Athlone is held by the English?"

"I do; but I hoped to meet a guide in the wood beyond who would lead us to a safe ford in the upper river."

"Can you name that guide?"

"He is called Barney of the Bow. Can you tell me of him?"

"I can tell you that he is one of the worst villains on the Shannon's side—an outlawed robber and a perfect savage."

"That is what the English say of him; but my friends in Dublin have a different story to tell of him."

"What do your friends in Dublin say of Barney of the Bow?"

"They say that he is one of the bravest men in all Ireland, and the best shot with the bow and arrow to be found in the three kingdoms. They say that while he shows little mercy to the English invaders, his heart is as soft as down to his own people."

"He is nothing of the kind, as I know him to be a born brute, in every manner and form. Ride on with us, sir coward."

The rude words were addressed to the runaway youth, who stared at the rough-spoken stranger while he drew his horse beside that of his former companion as they entered the wood.

(To be continued)

FACTS WORTH READING

320-ACRE POTATO PATCH ON BIG WISCONSIN FARM.

Many Wisconsin people, and indeed not a few in the vicinity of Hancock, will open their eyes in wonder when told of a 320-acre field of potatoes on the farm of the O'Connor brothers in the town of Hancock.

The longest rows in this field are seven-eighths of a mile one way and half a mile the other. Edward Erb, one of the crew on the large farm, marked the field with a four-row sled marker, and this almost perfect work is an important part of the system followed on the O'Connor farm. Their sprayers cover four rows and do much better work with less waste when the rows are straight. The diggers are drawn by four horses.

The plants on this big potato field are a fine stand and cover the ground, being almost a mat on forty acres of the earlier ones. The sight is a wonderful one to the visitor, but is common on the O'Connor farm, which has for more than a quarter of a century been in the lead in the production of potatoes, clover and rye. During that time the potato acreage has been larger in several years than now. One year it was over 500 acres, and the total yearly yield has been as high as 60,000 bushels.

AMERICAN MARKSMEN WIN.

By a margin of fifteen points the United States Rifle Team won the North America match in the international and interstate shooting tournament at Sea Girt, N. J., September 20. Only the United States and the Argentine Republic competed.

The team scores by stages follow:

	200	600	900	1,200	Total
	yds.	yds.	yds.	yds.	
United States.	580	579	588	512	2,259
Argentine.	565	588	582	509	2,244

The Argentine team's work in the long ranges was sensational. Until they came here in the late summer for practice the members had never shot on any range longer than the 300-metre, a little under 300 yards, and their work in so evenly matching the pick of the United States, who have shot the long ranges for years, was regarded as phenomenal.

The lead of fifteen points which the United States riflemen held at the end of the first stage was reduced to six on the 600-yard stage. The home team gained six more in the 900-yard stage, and at the opening of the 1,200, therefore, this country was leading by twelve points, which was increased to fifteen at the close.

SERVANTS TO ROYALTY.

Most people, if they ever give the matter a thought, would imagine that servants to royalty are born and bred on the fringe of the purple. It happens, however, that many of them nowadays are engaged precisely as other servants at agencies, or more truly, usually at one agency.

There is not a hundred miles from Sloane Square, London, in a quiet little street in a modest little house, a small servants' agency. It never advertises in any paper. Yet it has an enormous connection, and those rare and priceless beings, domestic servants, flock up and down its staircase in a manner which might make other would-be mistresses very envious. Here are engaged servants for Buckingham Palace and Windsor, for this royal Duke and that royal Duchess, not to speak of the wearers of ordinary strawberry leaves. The office was started and is kept by two ladies, well connected but not of rich estate. They keep four secretaries, and their methods would be considered by certain more up-to-date offices very peculiar. All letters are hand written and the click of the typewriter is unknown.

Wages in royal houses are naturally extremely good—a first footman who came from a minor royal household to a non-royal one electrified the more modest housemistress by asking \$750 a year and "all found," which was what he had been receiving. But then he knew four languages, an accomplishment which is more valuable to royalty (in a footman) than to more stay-at-home householders.

MUSKRATS.

It sounds rather unbelievable to state that the humble muskrat is worth more than the rather aristocratic oyster, or, in other words, trapping muskrats is a bigger industry financially than scooping up oysters from their various beds along our seacoast.

The muskrat is the most important fur-bearing animal of North America, and it must be remembered that there are some extremely valuable furs in North America. In one year (and this was several years ago) a million and a half muskrat skins were put on the market, and these brought to the trappers, who sell at the bottom price, of course, more than \$1,700,000.

The largest share of muskrats are trapped along the Atlantic seaboard, and up the tidewater streams of this coast in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Connecticut. Of course there are quantities of muskrats inland all through the country, around the great lakes and along the rivers and their tributaries.

But the most of these valuable little muskrats are trapped along the coast of the Middle Atlantic States. In Dorchester County, Maryland, which consists for a great part of marshes, these marshes are leased to trappers on a 50 per cent. basis. Every year more than a quarter of a million muskrats are trapped in the marshes of Dorchester County, Maryland.

Not only the fur of the market is used, but the meat also, which finds a local consumption and is shipped to Baltimore, Wilmington and other cities. It is surprising to learn that the financial return exceeds that of the large oyster industry of the same region. The fur of the black muskrat commands the highest price.

YOUNG TOM BROWN

OR,

THE BOY WHO KNEW HIS BUSINESS

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER VII (continued)

"Who can it be?" thought Tom, as he rushed to the window on the right and tried to raise the sash.

The sash seemed to have been nailed down, however, and refused to yield.

Tom soon settled it by breaking the window with his elbow.

"Are you there?" he shouted, peering in.

"Yes, I'm here! Save me, Tom Brown!" was the reply. "I can't help myself! I'm a prisoner! Quick! The smoke is choking me! Oh, I shall die!"

Tom sprang into the room, and, to his utter astonishment, saw Mr. Boggs, the banker, lying upon the floor tied up with a rope hand and foot.

If it had been any time for asking questions, Tom would probably have asked his share of them, but what he did was to rescue his enemy, the banker, from his disagreeable position and help get him down off the roof with Arthur's help.

Mr. Boggs seemed to be terribly frightened, but he was not hurt in any way.

"There was somebody else here—a girl," he gasped, before Tom attempted to speak. "I—I don't know who she is, but you—you want to save her, Tom Brown."

"She is already saved," replied Tom coldly. "I don't pretend to understand what brought you two to this house, but I suppose you will explain."

"Oh, yes! Certainly! Of course, I will explain," stammered the banker, looking very much confused.

"Where is this girl? Who—that is, I suppose you know her, Tom?"

"Yes, I know her," said Tom. "Do you?"

"Certainly! Of course! I—that is—where is she? I don't see her here anywhere, Tom Brown."

They had passed around to the front of the burning house now, and the whole clearing was lighted up as bright as day.

There would have not been the least difficulty in seeing Kate Merwin if she had been there, but she was not.

For some unaccountable reason Kate had taken it into her head to disappear.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUSINESS BEGINS TO BOOM.

Young Tom Brown's first idea was to shout out Kate's name, but again something seemed to hold him back.

"Nothing could have happened to her," he thought. "She must have gone away because she wanted to," and he nudged Arthur to keep still.

Meanwhile the house was burning fiercely. The fire had spread all over the roof, and the smoke was rushing out of every window. That nothing could save it from utter destruction was easily seen.

"Where is that girl?" demanded Mr. Boggs, turning upon Tom and Arthur. "Where is she, I say?"

"I don't know where she is any more than you do," replied Tom. "We left her here when we went to rescue you. She seems to have gone. I don't know where or why."

"Humph!" grunted the banker, looking more confused than ever. "This is queer. What did you say her name was, Tom Brown?"

"I didn't say. I thought you knew."

"Well, no. The fact is I don't know who she is. I heard her voice, that's all. What brought you boys into the swamp?"

"We were over to Johnstown, and were on our way home when we saw the smoke. We came into the swamp to see what it was all about," Tom replied.

"It's lucky you did. I suppose I should have been dead now if you hadn't. I shan't forget this, Tom Brown. I—I suppose you want to know how I came to be in the old Conklin House tied up that way?"

"Just as you like about that. I'm not at all curious," replied Tom, carelessly, for he felt quite certain that the banker had no intention whatever of telling.

He was right, for Mr. Boggs instantly replied:

"Oh, oh, well! That's all right, Tom. There are some things it is just as well that one don't know. As this happens to be one of them you are very wise in restraining your curiosity. Some day I will explain."

"By the way, Tom. I know now that I was mistaken in supposing that you stole the money from the bank. I am quite satisfied that you didn't do it, and I shall withdraw the charge."

"Thank you, for nothing," replied Tom. "You knew that perfectly well before."

"Now don't be surly, boy," said the banker, in a wheedling way. "Just please don't say anything about this affair, and I shall consider myself under obligations to you. By the way, Tom Brown, your father can have that loan of a thousand any time you want it. Call around at the bank and I will see that it's arranged."

"Don't want it," replied Tom, promptly. "Are you going my way, Mr. Boggs?"

"Well, no," replied the banker. "I think I will stay here and watch the fire. Perhaps you are not aware that I own the house, but I do. You needn't wait for me, boys. I'm ever and ever so much obliged."

"Cool, upon my word," said Arthur, as Banker Boggs walked over toward the burning house. "Looks as though he meant to shake us, Tom."

"We are dismissed, evidently," replied Tom; "and I think we might as well go."

"But Kate?"

"Say nothing about Kate. There is something wrong here. It's dead sure that he didn't know it was Kate who was in that other room."

"And you think Kate has gone home?"

"She has got out of his way, anyhow. Let's skip, Art. I can't afford to poke my nose into Kate Merwin's private affairs. We'll keep our mouths shut. The truth will be bound to come out later on."

Having come to this determination, Tom led the way out of the swamp.

Upon reaching the road he discovered that his wheel had disappeared, but Arthur's was still where they had left it, and a scrap of paper tightly folded up was tied to the handle-bar.

Tom unfolded it, and, striking a match, read aloud, as follows:

"Dear Tom: I have borrowed your wheel. It shall be returned to you safely. If you have any regard for me forget all that has happened to-night. Mr. Boggs will never speak of it, and if you and Arthur will only keep still you will confer a lasting obligation upon

"Your sincere friend, Kate."

"P. S.: If you have been wise enough not to tell Boggs that I was in the house I shall be thankful. In that case, never mention the fact even to him. K."

"Well!" exclaimed Arthur. "This just beats the band! We have run up against a first-class mystery, it seems."

"Mystery or not, I can't quarrel with the Merwins," replied Tom. "Arthur, I shall never open my mouth about this business, and I hope you agree to do the same."

"I'll think about it," replied Arthur. "There is evidently something crooked here, and I must say I don't like crooked work!"

"But for my sake!"

"Oh, that means for Kate Merwin's sake. Well, I make only one promise: before I get ready to speak I'll let you know."

And with this Tom had to be satisfied, and the boys started back to Dimsdale, taking turns on Arthur's wheel.

Here they parted in front of the wrecked bank building, and Young Tom Brown went home to report to his father that Jim Roebuck had been engaged.

Tom remained determined to say nothing of the affair of the swamp to any one, and as the days passed neither he nor Arthur breathed a word.

These were busy days for Young Tom Brown. Jim Roebuck arrived promptly at seven o'clock next morning to find a big gang of mechanics and laborers crowding the yard between Mr. Brown's shop and the house.

"Well, well, Tom, you have got right down to business!" he exclaimed. "What are we to do with all these men?"

"Clear away the ruins of Dr. Merwin's house, for one thing, and pull down the upper stories of the Jones Block, for another," replied Tom. "The team will be on hand in half an hour. I've got everything ready for a start so far as I know. Father wants you to begin as soon as possible. If you want to see him he will be ready to talk to you about noon; meanwhile I'm supposed to be boss."

"Blessed if I hadn't just as soon work under you as the old man," replied Roebuck. "You seem to know your business, that's one sure thing."

Tom laughed, and that was the beginning of a business which increased day by day.

The men were put right to work, and so large were the gangs that in three days the Jones Block was ready for rebuilding, and by the end of the week Dr. Merwin's cellar stood clear, with the old brick all in a neat pile in the street, and everything ready to begin on the new house.

Do not for an instant suppose that Young Tom Brown hung about these rubbish-clearing jobs.

The young contractor was far too busy for that.

He was here, there and everywhere. One day it was a flying trip to Chicago to buy lumber, the next it was a run up to Milwaukee to arrange for brick.

Every morning Tom had to be at the office of Mr. Plautz to consult him about the plans for Dr. Merwin's house, and on the morning after the work on the Jones Block was finished, Mr. Jones asked for figures on the new building.

Tom sat up half the night with his father working over the plans and specifications, which Mr. Plautz had hastily prepared.

Next day he put in his big estimate.

The prediction so confidently made by Tom's father had been fulfilled to the letter.

Contractors flocked into Dimsdale from all sides, and as a matter of course mechanics and laborers followed them.

The town was now filled with strangers, and business was booming, but so far Brown & Son had headed off all competitors.

Not only had Tom engaged all the local labor, but he had also secured the horses and carts available.

The result was a great rush of business of a certain kind.

Everybody was anxious to have the wrecks of their buildings cleared away, and so far there was no one in town able to undertake the work but Tom, and this, with the figuring he had to do, kept the enterprising boy as busy as a bee.

But the new contractors were seeking work on all sides, and several of them secured profitable jobs, for it was plain that Brown & Son could not do it all.

When the estimates on the Jones Block job came to be opened, Tom was the lowest bidder by some \$25.

Mr. Jones immediately awarded him the contract, and the same day Tom secured several other small contracts.

"We have got enough to keep us going for a couple of months, Tom," remarked Jim Roebuck that night; "don't you think we had better haul in and take no more contracts until we have made a start?"

FROM ALL POINTS

Solomon Ashley, Kentucky's champion squirrel killer, recently bagged sixty-four squirrels near his home on Redbird Creek, in Edmonson county. Mr. Ashley during the hunting season last year killed 1,082 squirrels. The gun used by Mr. Ashley in slaying the squirrels is an old-time long-barrelled rifle, a present from his grandfather. He moulds his own bullets from bars of lead and never fails to get his squirrel out of the tallest timber.

One year ago, while George Moore, living between Battle Creek and Bellevue, Mich., was ploughing a field, a stick flew up and put out one eye. Doctors told him it was something that wouldn't happen once in a thousand times, so Moore returned to his farm work. Moore has just been brought to Battle Creek with his remaining eye blinded. This time a stone instead of a stick did the business, tossed by the same plough. He is not likely to recover his sight.

A collision with a whale caused such serious damage to the Danish steamer Wladmir Reitz that the vessel was forced to put in at St. John's, N. F., for repairs. The accident occurred about 250 miles east of St. John's. The crew of the steamer saw the whale approaching at terrific speed, but could not alter the ship's course in time to prevent the impact. The whale struck the steamer head-on, knocking a four-foot hole in the bow. The accident is believed to have killed the whale, for the monster sank immediately, its blood discoloring the water.

Those who buy belting for machinery will not have to worry about the price of leather in the years to come if a certain sort of belting which is being manufactured by a firm in Connecticut proves to be a success. The new product is called flexible steel belting and is really a step further than the chain and sprocket idea. The belting is made in a complicated series of links and can be used on all pulleys of from two inches in diameter to the largest size. It has been designed especially for service where atmospheric conditions are bad for leather and rubber belts.

An interesting introduction, showing the method of "address sleuthing" used in the postal department, precedes the street list. Everything is arranged alphabetically and the system, deemed so complicated by the general public, is clear and easily usable by concerns and private individuals who have large mailing lists. One of the commonest errors is easily solvable by its pages—the habit of writing "City," as the final word in an address.

If everybody wrote out the name of the town instead of just "City," when addressing letters, there would be fewer jobs in the Dead Letter Office.

Not an invention, perhaps, but quite interesting as a novelty, are the printed four-in-hand ties which English

haberdashers are preparing to put on the market this fall. The prints will represent sports and other lines of activity. One necktie will show an aeroplane flying over a battleship and another will bear the figures of ballet dancers. A third style shows pictures of pheasants and grouse and is evidently intended to show that the wearer will go hunting before long. Still another carries the heads of a girl and a thoroughbred racehorse, indicating a taste for racing, and so on.

The discovery of a diamond ring in a large clam caught off the beach at Patchogue, N. Y., has stirred the beach combers into activity. Following the announcement of August Ryer, a barber, who lives in that village, that he saw the clam opened and the handsome ring taken out by a young woman, he has received more than a dozen letters from summer tourists who claim to have lost valuable jewelry in the vicinity during the season. It is the belief of Patchogue residents that South Beach is heavily laden with diamonds and other valuables lost by the vacationists. The beach combers and clam fishers, spurred on by the many missives telling of lost jewelry, are working each day with hopes of the sands and clams giving up their hoard.

Owen Smith, a farmer, of Madison township, Pike county, Ind., reports the appearance of four large droves of wild pigeons that came to his farm a few days ago and are roosting in his woods. If the birds are wild pigeons they are the first to visit this part of the State in twenty years, but when pigeons were numerous a number of roosts were in the vicinity of Mr. Smith's farm. The supposed pigeons are feeding in a nearby grain field, and are even more tame than a wild dove, which they closely resemble, except that they stand more erect, are a little larger and are of a darker hue. They fly in flocks like blackbirds, and there are four different bunches of them. Efforts are being made to catch some of the pigeons alive. It is estimated there are more than 1,000 birds on Mr. Smith's farm.

The production of gold in the United States in 1912 amounted to \$95,451,500, a decrease of \$3,438,500 as compared with the previous year and the lowest American production since 1907. The output of silver was \$3,766,800 fine ounces, valued at \$39,197,500, an increase of 3,367,400 ounces over 1911, the greatest gain being in the State of Utah. The decrease in gold was caused because Nevada's output lost \$4,521,200 as compared with 1911. George E. Roberts, Director of the Mint, said that while the output of gold had decreased in the United States and Australia, there was sufficient increase in South Africa to make the world's production of gold for 1912 greater than in 1911. California led the States in gold production, putting out \$20,008,000. Colorado was second with \$18,741,200 and Alaska third with \$17,198,600.

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BRIEF BUT POINTED ITEMS

Edward W. Wallace, of Rockville Centre, Long Island, N. Y., a struggling law clerk, who has just been admitted to the bar, will come into a fortune of nearly \$300,000. Wallace will receive the fortune under the will of his grandmother, Hannah Wallace. Nearly all of it is in real estate. Hannah Wallace was the widow of Captain Edward Wallace, who was captain of sailing vessels for years, until the time of his retirement a few years ago. The old captain amassed his fortune in the West Indian trade. Wallace will continue to practice law.

The Secretary of the Navy provisionally awarded contracts to the Bath Iron Works and the Fore River Shipbuilding Corporation for one torpedo boat destroyer each, and the New York Shipbuilding Company and the William Cramp Company for two destroyers. The contracts are dependent upon the builders accepting certain modifications concerning guaranteed fuel consumption. The awards are:

One vessel to the Bath Iron Works, at \$884,000; one vessel to the Fore River Shipbuilding Corporation, at \$861,000; two vessels to the New York Shipbuilding Company, at \$825,000 each, and two vessels to William Cramp & Sons, at \$881,000 each.

The new destroyers are the largest of any of their class yet designed. They mark, a Navy Department announcement says, a decided advance in radius of action at a high speed and have largely increased offensive power. A number of changes in fittings have been made to increase seagoing qualities, and the living quarters of men and officers have been improved. The main characteristics of the new boats are:

Length, 3,310 feet; beam, 29 feet 10 inches; draft, 9 feet 3 inches; displacement, 1,090 tons; battery, four 4-inch rapid fire guns and four twin torpedo tubes.

The new destroyers will be oil burners exclusively and will be propelled by turbines.

Since the recent visit of Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels to Communipaw Brooklyn merchants who depend largely upon the workmen in the local yard for their existence are somewhat depressed.

While it was not stated definitely that the Secretary of

the Navy favored the proposed New Jersey site, it was made known that the Brooklyn Navy Yard was considered inadequate.

He did not make a specific statement of general inadequacy, but stated that only two ships could be brought into the local yard every twenty-four hours, on account of the tide, and that there is only one dry dock there large enough to accommodate a dreadnought.

The point was raised that, even if the Government sees fit to establish a new Navy Yard on the proposed site, there is a possibility of continuing operations in the Brooklyn yard. To this he made no definite reply. He simply stated that he wished to confer with President Wilson and his several naval aides before he would make any recommendations whatsoever.

The fate of the Brooklyn Navy Yard is now more uncertain than ever, but if the new yard is established, the combined civic forces in this borough and the local representatives in the Government in Washington will make a strong fight for the continuance of the local institution.

JOKES AND JESTS.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but are you sitting on my hat?" "Oh, pray excuse me, I thought it was my husband's."

Wife (after a quarrel)—I wish I'd never met you! Husband—Yes. Now, when it's too late, you are sorry for me.

Alice—What makes you think your new photographs are so horrid? Gladys—All my girl friends ask me for one, but my male friends don't.

Mr. McSwatt was showing some visitors over his new residence. Arriving at the nursery, he remarked: "This, gentlemen, is the bawl room."

Mrs. Dashaway—How long had you known your husband before you were married? Mrs. Gnaggs—I didn't know him at all. I thought I did.

Mrs. Newbride—You'll not find me difficult to suit, Mary. Mary (the new cook)—I'm sure not, ma'am. I saw your husband as I came in, ma'am.

"You look just the same as ever," said the Dime Savings Bank. "Well," replied the boy as he shook the bank, "there appears to be no change in you."

"Why didn't you send your man to mend my electric bell?" "He did go, madam; but as he rang three times and got no answer he decided that there was nobody at home."

The New York girl, spending her vacation in the country, was complaining to the farmer about the savage way the bull regarded her. "Well," said the farmer, "it must be on account of that red blouse you're wearing." "Dear me," said the girl; "of course, I know it's awfully out of fashion, but I had no idea a country bull would notice it!"

WITHIN SIGHT OF THE MATTERHORN.

By Kit Clyde.

Some dozen years ago an invalid American lady named Mrs. Summers was staying near Zermatt, in Switzerland, for the benefit of her health. Her two boys, fresh from school, joined her for the holidays, glad indeed to have such a complete change from the monotony of school life. They never tired of wandering up the valleys or climbing part way up the numerous mountains which made Zermatt the headquarters of the Alpine Club. Of course, their excursions were limited, both by their promises to their mother and by the rules of the Alpine exploration, which forbid any difficult ascent being attempted except with competent guides. But notwithstanding, they found plenty of places to ramble about, though it was their daily wish to make an ascent of a more difficult kind than those to which they were restricted.

"I mean to go up there when I'm grown up," said Ted, the younger of the brothers, to Rex. He pointed to the solitary peak of the Matterhorn, standing boldly out against the sky, its summit covered with perpetual snow.

"Wish I'd been Whymper," said Rex; "he was the first to ever go up. But mother won't hear of our trying it."

However, in the course of a fortnight a large concession was made in their favor. One of the most celebrated guides had a son of about twelve years of age, called Jean, an active, bright lad, who aspired to succeed his father in his dangerous calling so soon as he was old enough. But, young as he was, he had already made many difficult excursions, and even now was frequently employed to take the less adventurous tourists to some well-known spot. With this young guide the boys struck up an acquaintance. Their talk was of a very polyglot character—for the English boys did not speak French well, while little Jean was decidedly weak in the English language; but notwithstanding these drawbacks they made capital friends.

Mrs. Summers was not unwilling to have Jean a companion of her sons in their rambles. So day after day the three boys made excursions in every direction, and found themselves accomplishing with comparative ease walks and climbs which were not to be despised even by the accomplished tourist. Youth and practice gave them considerable certainty and skill in surmounting difficulties and occasional dangers of Alpine climbing.

"I say, Jean," said Rex one day, "have you ever seen a chamois?"

"Yes, I did once," replied Jean, "but it was a great way off, and ran away before I got near. But my father has shot three."

"I'd sooner see a chamois than anything!" cried Ted.

"They are very rare now," said Jean, "especially so near to towns. You have to go a long way to find them."

"Farther than we could get in a day?"

"Oh, much farther."

"Then we must give that up," said Rex. "Look here, Jean, have you ever been to the top of that glacier?"

He pointed to a mass of ice that in the distance looked like a torrent of glistening water rushing down between two mountains.

"Yes, once; my father took me. But it is a long way."

"Can we do it in a day?"

"We might if we started early."

"Then we'll have a try at it. You shall have a couple of francs if we do it."

This was not a big bribe, but it was considerable to both Rex and little Jean. The latter was only too willing to make the attempt, but, fearing his father would never permit it if he knew, he resolved to do it without his knowledge, a fault that very nearly cost him dear.

"We shall want a rope," he said. "There are some deep crevasses, and we must be tied together as we cross."

"All right! Can you bring a rope?"

"I can get one of my father's, perhaps; he is away with a party going up the Matterhorn."

"That's capital! Meet us at seven to-morrow morning; we will be ready."

This was the first time that the boys had deliberately planned an excursion which would lead them far from the well-known routes. Once or twice before their enthusiasm had led them farther than they intended, but they could not help feeling that this was a different sort of thing, and Rex especially did not feel quite comfortable when he bade his mother good-night, telling her they were going for a long walk next day, and would have to start early.

"Take care of yourself, Rex," said Mrs. Summers. "Don't get into any danger; you know how anxious I am about you when you are away amongst the mountains."

"All right, mother; we shall come back safely, never fear!"

Even at seven o'clock the sun was bright and warm in the valley, and it was hard to imagine that on the surrounding mountain-tops its rays were not enough to melt the dazzling snow. The three lads set off in high spirits. Jean had managed to secure a good rope; he carried his own ice-axe and the others their alpenstocks. In an hour they were far above the level of the village, and amongst the tremendous mountains; another hour took them out of sight of houses, and they were alone.

"We don't seem to have come any distance," said Rex. "The glacier seems as far off as ever."

"It takes three hours to get to the foot," said Jean, "and we shall not get to the top till the afternoon. We can't get quite to the top at all, really; we must cross it as soon as we can and come back on the other side."

"Very well; let's go ahead as fast as we can."

In the course of the next half-hour the American boys found themselves in a part of the country quite unknown to them. But Jean seemed to be familiar with the route, and piloted them upwards with complete confidence. They had to cross one or two small torrents and plunge through an occasional group of firs, but the path was not a difficult one on the whole, and Rex felt easier in his mind at finding they were encountering no dangers.

They reached a corner of a shoulder of the mountain about mid-day, and sat down to rest. Beside them was a precipice leading down to the glacier, parallel with which they now had to proceed. Above them frowned the everlasting hills, crowned with snow which glistened in the bright sun. They sat down to rest for half an hour and

eat some of the sandwiches which they had brought with them.

Suddenly Jean put his hand on Rex's arm, whispering: "Keep still! Don't you see it?"

They looked where he pointed; there was a chamois browsing quietly on the scanty herbage, ignorant of the fact that three pairs of eyes were watching his every movement.

The beautiful creature lifted his head and stood motionless in an attitude of attention. The boys crouched down and held their breath, though they were a quarter of a mile away. Suddenly he put back his ears, turned as if on a pivot, and sprang down the rock. Rex started to his feet in instinctive pursuit, forgot that he was on the edge of the precipice, and, missing his footing, disappeared from sight with a cry.

Ted lost his head, and would have jumped down after his brother, but Jean held him back.

"Keep still!" he cried. "We may save him! Perhaps he has not fallen far. Rex!" he shouted, but there was no reply.

The young mountaineer's eye soon caught sight of a broken part of the ledge down which he might clamber a little way and have a better view. He descended quickly, and Ted's heart gave a great leap of joy as he heard Jean call out:

"I see him! he is on a ledge not far down. Untwist the rope."

"I will go down," said Jean, decisively. "You stay at the top and don't let the stones at the edge fall down on me."

It was not a difficult feat for Jean to accomplish; the descent of a rope is what most boys can manage. But it is a very different thing when the rope is swinging loose over a precipice nearly a thousand feet deep. However, Jean had a cool head, and his nerves were steady, so he let himself down quietly, not thinking of the danger he ran. He was soon beside the prostrate boy, and to his great relief found that his heart was still beating.

But now came a difficulty which for a moment dismayed even the plucky little Jean. The rope was long enough for him to attain the ledge easily, but it did not reach to within nearly two feet of the rock on which Rex was lying.

A moment's thought solved the problem. "Ted!" he shouted. Ted's face appeared over the edge. "You must come down to me."

Trembling fearfully Ted managed to obey, and was soon on the narrow ledge beside his brother. Rex gave a sigh as Ted knelt beside him, but did not regain consciousness.

"Hold him up while I tie him," said Jean. Ted supported him carefully while Jean made a loop and slipped it securely under his arms.

"Now I will climb up to the top, and then you must follow," said Jean. "It will take both of us to pull him up. Don't be afraid, the rope is very strong."

So the brothers were left alone while Jean climbed up. But to Ted's surprise he came down again, and despair was written on his face.

"I can't do it," he said. "The top overhangs so much that I can't get over it; there is nothing to catch hold of or to rest my feet against. It is impossible."

Ted gave way at this terrible news, and throwing himself on the ground began to cry convulsively.

"Oh, what will mother say?" he sobbed. "We shall all die here and nobody will ever find us."

A large hawk swooped down near them and then flew away across the valley. Jean watched its flight and wished that he too had wings.

He looked carefully around, and his eye rested on a small boulder which projected from the side of the precipice.

"If I were only on that I could scramble to the top," he said. "I almost reached to that very rock when I clambered down to see if Rex had fallen to the bottom."

"If!" yes, but the boulder was at least ten feet away, and there was nothing to afford a foothold between it and the ledge on which they were standing.

"I have it!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Quick, Ted—take down Rex again!"

They loosened the knot and once more laid Rex on the rock. He opened his eyes and looked feebly around, but again lapsed into unconsciousness. There was a bad cut at the back of his head, but there was no time to think of that now; the first thing was to get them all out of immediate danger.

"Now," said Jean, seizing the rope firmly with both hands and feet, "swing me, Ted. Don't be afraid; I shan't fall."

He leaped into the air toward the coveted boulder, and swung back again to the ledge. The impetus took him right into the air on the opposite side, and he was hanging over the glacier, with nothing between him and it. Ted seized his idea and as he came back gave him a hard push toward the coveted spot; this time he came within a few feet of it. It was a terrible crisis; it seemed as if the daring boy must get dashed to pieces against the side of the rock, but he guided himself skillfully. One more swing and he was safe. He clasped the projecting boulder firmly and loosened himself from the rope, which swung back to within Ted's reach.

"Now, Ted," Jean soon shouted from above, "leave hold of the rope for a minute."

Ted obeyed, wondering what was Jean's idea. It was pulled out of reach for a moment, and then again lowered. This time there was plenty of it. Jean had taken it from the tree and was holding it in his hands. Ted was able to fasten it securely to Rex as he lay on the ground.

"Tell me when it is safely tied," cried Jean.

"It's all right," shouted back Ted.

"Then lift him up and hold him while I fasten the rope to the tree again."

This was soon done. Ted then commenced the ascent of the rope, and thanks to Jean's assistance at the top, he surmounted the difficulty of the overhanging ledge. In five minutes more all three were in safety. Rex's head was bound up, and Jean started in search of some water, leaving Ted by his brother.

Water was soon found and Jean brought his hat full. Thanks to its icy coldness, it had a powerful effect on Rex, who in a few minutes was sufficiently recovered to hear how he was rescued. Before long he was able to commence the return journey leaning on the arms of his companions.

GOOD READING

It is reported of the fall of a large meteorite into the Seacownet River near Tiverton, R. I., one night recently that the concussion was so great as to break windows near by and shake crockery from shelves. This would make it appear a large mass, worth recovering by some museum having in mind the remarkable collection of these metallic bodies from the heavens in New York's Museum of Natural History.

Although the ancients preserved many such specimens, it is only within about 100 years that scientific men have accepted the possibility of a meteor surviving contact with the atmosphere to the extent of reaching the earth in substantial form. Now no one questions the fact so well attested by numerous exhibits.

It is a singular thing that with the known fall of numberless masses of this kind, some of them big enough to crush the strongest building ever constructed, they have done practically no damage within the range of recorded history. Only one man is known to have been killed by a meteorite—in India many years ago. Only one habitation of man is known to have been crushed—a house in Austria, whose occupants were uninjured. England records the fall of a meteorite within ten feet of a man, and in France one is known to have fallen within a few feet of a little girl. There are other similar instances.

But it is altogether a remarkable record of immunity from danger in a case where man's helplessness is so complete.

Wagner is regarded as the greatest natural ball player of his own or any other time. This is the story of how he got his start, as he told it the other day:

"I broke into baseball by posing as my brother 'Al.' We were playing ball around Mansfield, Pa. They call it Carnegie now. That's where I was born back in 1874. My brother received an offer from Canton, Ohio, before he was offered a place with Mansfield, Ohio, club, both in the same league.

"The day he got the second offer he turned to me and told me to go to Mansfield. I got there early in the afternoon, and a man named Taylor, who owned the team, recognized me. He had seen me play. The club was hard put for a third baseman, however, and Taylor decided to take a chance with me.

"It so happened that Mansfield played Canton that day. My brother was in the line-up of the Canton team, and the pitcher, 'Toots' Barrett, a left-hander, was also from Mansfield. They regarded me as pretty much of a kid, and when Canton got away to a good early lead in the game, Barrett let up in his pitching when I went to bat. He wanted to see me make good, and figured that a couple of hits more or less would not affect his rating any.

"I made a couple of hits in this way, and then came the ninth inning. Never will I forget it. Mansfield was three runs to the bad when we went to bat. They needed four to win. We filled the bases, and it was my turn to bat.

"Taylor was not 'wise' to the fact that Barrett had been easing up when I had been at bat before and made a couple of hits, or he might have sent in a pinch hitter. I made a couple of bingles, so he let me stick.

"With the bases full Barrett meant to strike me out. It was too ticklish a time for monkey business. He shoved across a fast one, and I knocked it over the fence for a home run and won the game.

"It was just a case of the luck of things. That's it all the time. If the pitcher's lucky, he gets you. If you're lucky, you get him. You know some fellows are born lucky. Others are born unlucky. So far as my batting is concerned, I guess I was born lucky, that's all."

A husky native of Cape Breton, who looked as though he had never had anything on earth the matter with him except the usual wounds and scars incidental to football, was talking at the Princeton Club to a group of friends.

"I heard one of you men say a while ago," he said, "that there wasn't any known cure for rheumatism. I know a spring of pure water on Cape Breton Island, where I was born. This spring is on the top of a hill about sixteen miles from Grand Narrows, which is somewhat of a summer resort for a good many people from the United States, though most of them don't know about the spring. It is accessible from the small hamlet of East Bay, where a carriage may be taken about three miles to the top of the hill.

"The water is perfectly clear and has a sparkle to it like vichy, with a somewhat similar taste. I know a man in Grand Narrows who suffered from rheumatism and for a year had to leave his business and remain in bed most of the time. When he did get out occasionally it was on crutches. The doctors had given him up and he had about surrendered to the inevitable himself when a friend insisted on his trying the spring. He knew about it, but had so little faith that he wouldn't go. But the last call sounded loud enough to start him, so one day with this friend he went across the bay and up the hill. He hobbled up on his crutches and began to drink the water. He continued for several hours guzzling the water till he was full of it, but feeling no effect in any way except that his thirst was allayed. Then just before leaving he soaked his underwear in it, hobbled back to the carriage and started home.

"Half a mile along the way he began to feel strange sensations chasing themselves over his system as if his muscles were crawling around under his skin and presently the stiffened joints began suppling up. He could feel the limbering process going on so distinctly and it was so encouraging that he insisted on getting out of the carriage and trying to walk. Strength was coming to him and before a mile had been covered he gave a shout of joy, tossed his crutches aside and ran ahead of the carriage the balance of the way to East Bay. His rheumatism had departed and it never came back."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS UNKNOWN MAN HAS KILLED AND MUTILATED MARYLAND STOCK.

With the aid of a private detective from Baltimore, farmers in the Delaware-Maryland peninsula are searching the countryside for a man who for fifteen years has been slaying valuable cattle and horses by cutting out their tongues and leaving the mutilated animals to bleed to death. The present investigation was undertaken when Philip Graham, a prominent and well-to-do farmer, found three of his blooded cows lying dead in a field, their tongues amputated. The crime appears to have been committed by a person adept in the use of a razor or a coon knife. Fifteen years ago James H. Jarrel, a tenant on the Joseph Smith estate, went into a field one foggy morning and stumbled over the body of one of his prize milch cows, its tongue cut out. Just as the neighborhood had begun to forget the outrage W. H. Lewis found one of his champion cows maltreated in the same brutal manner.

There were one or two other cases, attended by talk of lynching a negro suspected by one of the posses. Then, six years ago, O. T. Goodwin, living on an extensive farm near Murdock's Corner, found a cow minus its tongue. Four years ago Oscar Pleasant lost a favorite driving horse in the same cruel manner.

CABINET MINISTERS' DAUGHTERS SERVANTS IN ENGLAND.

The daughters of two Danish Cabinet Ministers are in domestic service in London. They are Miss Gerda Pedersen, daughter of the Danish Minister of Agriculture, and Miss Keiser Nielson, daughter of the Minister of Education.

They have come to London to learn the English language and English customs and manners and to generally enlarge their minds and broaden their outlook.

Mr. Pedersen visited London recently, and while here called on his daughter at the place where she was employed. After he explained who she was the girl's mistress allowed her four days to accompany her father seeing the sights of London.

Pedersen declared in an interview he was proud of the courage and independence of spirit his daughter displayed in thus facing the world in her unusual capacity for one of her birth and attainments. Both girls have consistently refused to look upon themselves as notabilities and have refused to give newspaper interviews.

Miss Pedersen is under contract to remain a year longer in her present place. Miss Nielson expects to return to Denmark with her at the end of that time.

DEER OVERRUN ALABAMA.

Since the new game law, which prohibits the killing of any but buck deer, went into effect, the increase in deer throughout Alabama has become so great that farmers are appealing to the State Game and Fish Commissioner for

protection. E. F. Hamner, of Tuscaloosa County, writes that the deer in his county are damaging crops seriously, and that his neighbors are not only threatening to kill deer out of season, but to kill buck and doe alike. Mr. Hamner told the commissioner that it was not the desire of his brother farmers or himself to violate the law, but unless the State would agree to reimburse them for damages done by the bold deer, they would have to kill them in self-defense.

In replying to Mr. Hamner, Commissioner Wallace stated that the law made it a violation for deer to be killed before November 1, and then only bucks could be shot. He said he was highly gratified to learn of the abundance of the deer, and that if any great damage was occurring he would endeavor to have the State reimburse the persons damaged.

Commissioner Wallace recently issued a bulletin in which it was stated that there had been a large increase of deer in Alabama within the past few years. Deer have been seen in fifty of the sixty-seven counties, and Mr. Wallace believes that the time will shortly come, under the operation of the game law, when deer will be as plentiful in Alabama as in the time of the early settlers and frontiersmen.

HUNTING HUMAN LEOPARDS.

The murderous native organization of Sierra Leone, known all up and down the west coast of Africa as the Human Leopard Society, is being relentlessly pursued by the British authorities to its furthest hiding places. The determination is to extirpate it, but the task will be difficult, for this sinister and baneful association has obtained such a strong grip on the superstitions of the natives in its several hundred years of existence that it will fight and die hard.

The society is a secret organization. It has operated with particular atrocity of recent years in the Northern Sherbro district, and most, if not all, of the principal natives of this region belong to it.

Between twenty and thirty murders have been committed by members of the society since 1907. The purpose undoubtedly was to provide human flesh for their fellow members, but whether this was done merely for the gratification of the taste for cannibalism or whether the killings were a part of some secret rite of the organization whereby the natives believe their mental and physical powers are increased has not been conclusively learned.

Matters reached such a crisis a few months ago that a special court was appointed and many arrests were made. Among the members placed on trial were several paramount chiefs.

Eventually, under a special ordinance passed to suppress the society, seven men were executed for murder, two condemned to life imprisonment and eleven were expelled from the protectorate.

GIANT SAW PUZZLE.

This puzzle contains twenty-one pieces of wood nicely finished; take them apart and put them together same as illustrated. Everybody would like to try it, as it is very fascinating. Price, by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

DELUSION TRICK.

A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c. M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

ITCH POWDER.

Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It will make him scratch, rear, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 16 cents a box, by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

COMICAL RUBBER STAMPS.

A complete set of five grotesque little people made of indestructible rubber mounted on black walnut blocks. The figures consist of Policeman, Chinaman, and other laughable figures as shown in pictures. As each figure is mounted on a separate block, any boy can set up a regular parade or circus by printing the figures in different positions. With each set of figures we send a bottle of colored ink, an ink pad and full instructions. Children can stamp these pictures on their toys, picture books, writing paper and envelopes, and they are without doubt the most amusing and entertaining novelty gotten up in years. Price of the complete set of Rubber Stamps, with ink and ink pad, only 10c., 3 sets for 25c., one dozen 90c., by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

JUMPING TELESCOPE.

This is an oblong tube in exact imitation of a telescope. By looking through it, reveals one highly magnified picture of a dancer or other subject. It contains on the side a button, which the victim is told to press for a change of picture. Instead of another picture appearing, the entire inside part shoots out, as shown in illustration. It is entirely harmless, but gives the victim a genuine scare. Price, 15c. each; 2 for 25c. by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

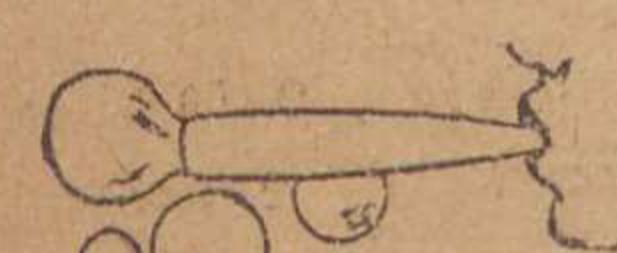
BUBBLE BLOWER.

With this device, a continuous series of bubbles can be blown. It is a wooden, cigar-shaped blower, encasing a small vial, in which there is a piece of soap. The vial is filled with water, and a peculiarly perforated cork is inserted. When you blow in to the mouthpiece, it sets up a hydraulic pressure through the cork perforations and causes bubble after bubble to come out. No need of dipping into water once the little bottle is filled. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



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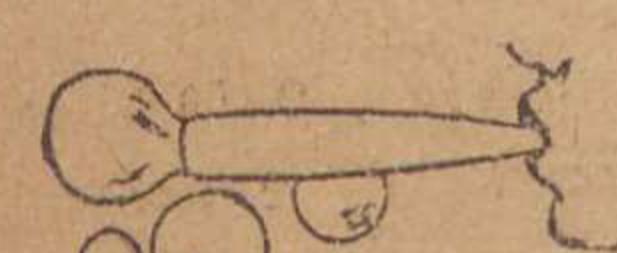
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This little novelty creates a world of laughter. Its chief attractiveness is that it takes a few seconds before leaping high in the air, so that when set, very innocently along side of an unsuspecting person, he is suddenly startled by the wonderful activity of this frog. Price, 15c. each by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.



Just out, and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal. Price, 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE PEG JUMPER.



A very effective pocket trick, easily to be performed by any one. A miniature paddle is shown. Central holes are drilled through it. A wooden peg is inside of the upper hole. Showing now both sides of the paddle, the performer causes, by simply breathing upon it, the peg to leave the upper hole, and appear in the middle one. Then it jumps to the lower hole, back to the middle one, and lastly to the upper hole. Both sides of the paddle are repeatedly shown. Price by mail, 15c. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

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Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickelized brass. It holds just one dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

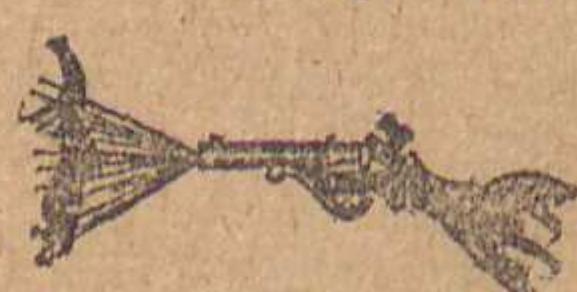
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The wonder of the age. The greatest small tool in the world. In this little instrument you have in combination seven useful tools embracing Key Ring, Pencil Sharpener, Nail Cutter and Cleaner, Watch Opener, Cigar Clipper, Letter Opener and Screw Driver. It is not a toy, but a useful article, made of cutlery steel, tempered and highly nickelized. Therefore will carry an edge the same as any piece of cutlery. As a useful tool, nothing has ever been offered to the public to equal it. Price, 15c., mailed, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

DEAD SHOT SQUIRT PISTOL.



If you shoot a man with this "gun" he will be too mad to accept the ancient excuse—"I didn't know it was loaded." It loads easily with a full charge of water, and taking aim, press the rubber bulb at the butt of the pistol, when a small stream of water is squirted into his face. The best thing to do then is to pocket your gun and run. There are "loads of fun" in this wicked little joker, which looks like a real revolver, trigger, cock, chambers, barrel and all. Price only 7c.; 4 for 25c.; one dozen 60c. by mail postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE FIGHTING ROOSTERS.



A full blooded pair of fighting game cocks. These liliputian fighters have real feathers, yellow legs and fiery red combs, their movements when fighting are perfectly natural and lifelike, and the secret of their movements is known only to the operator, who can cause them to battle with each other as often and as long as desired. Independent of their fighting proclivities they make very pretty mantel ornaments. Price for the pair in a strong box, 10c.; 3 pairs for 25c. by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

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